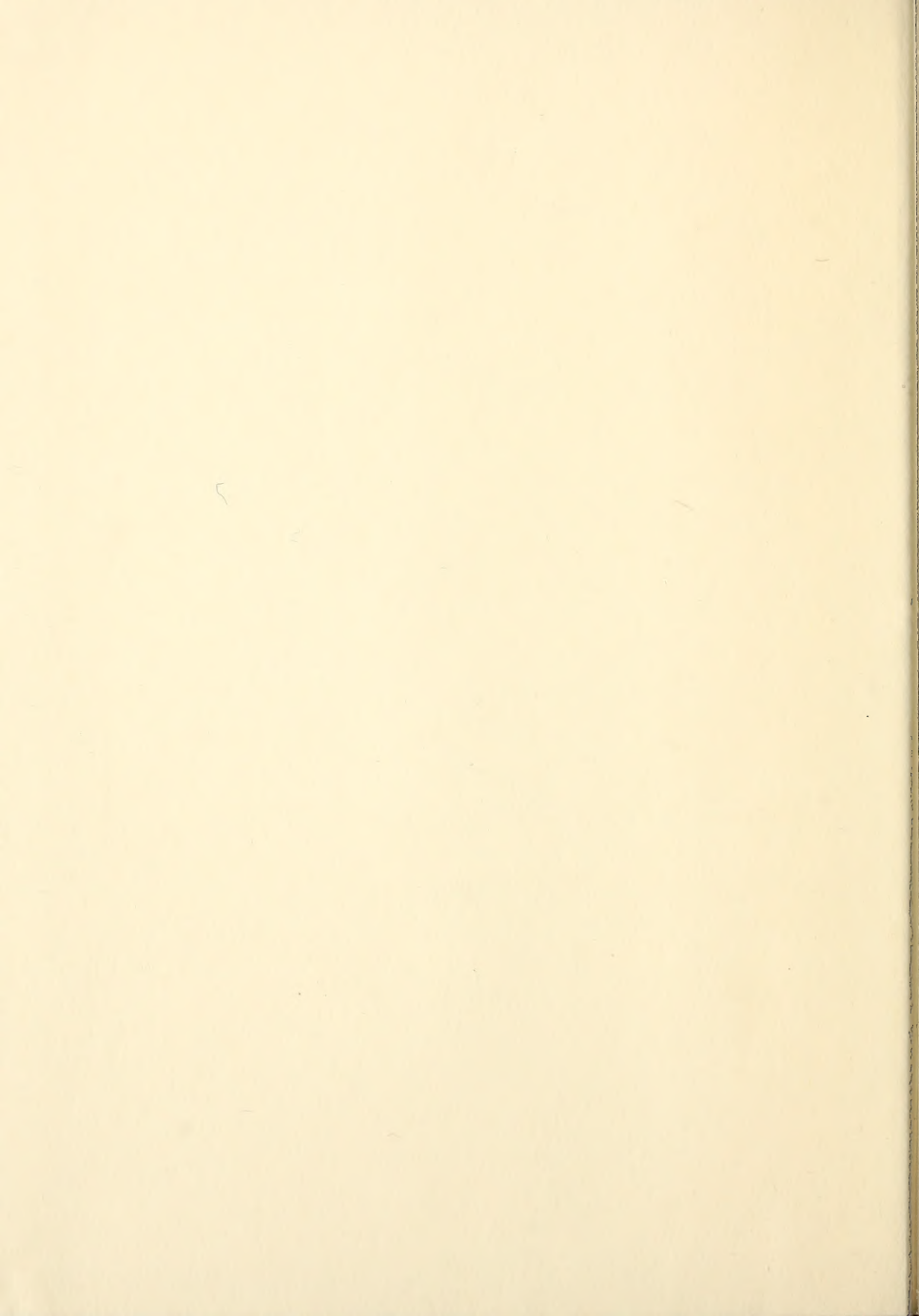
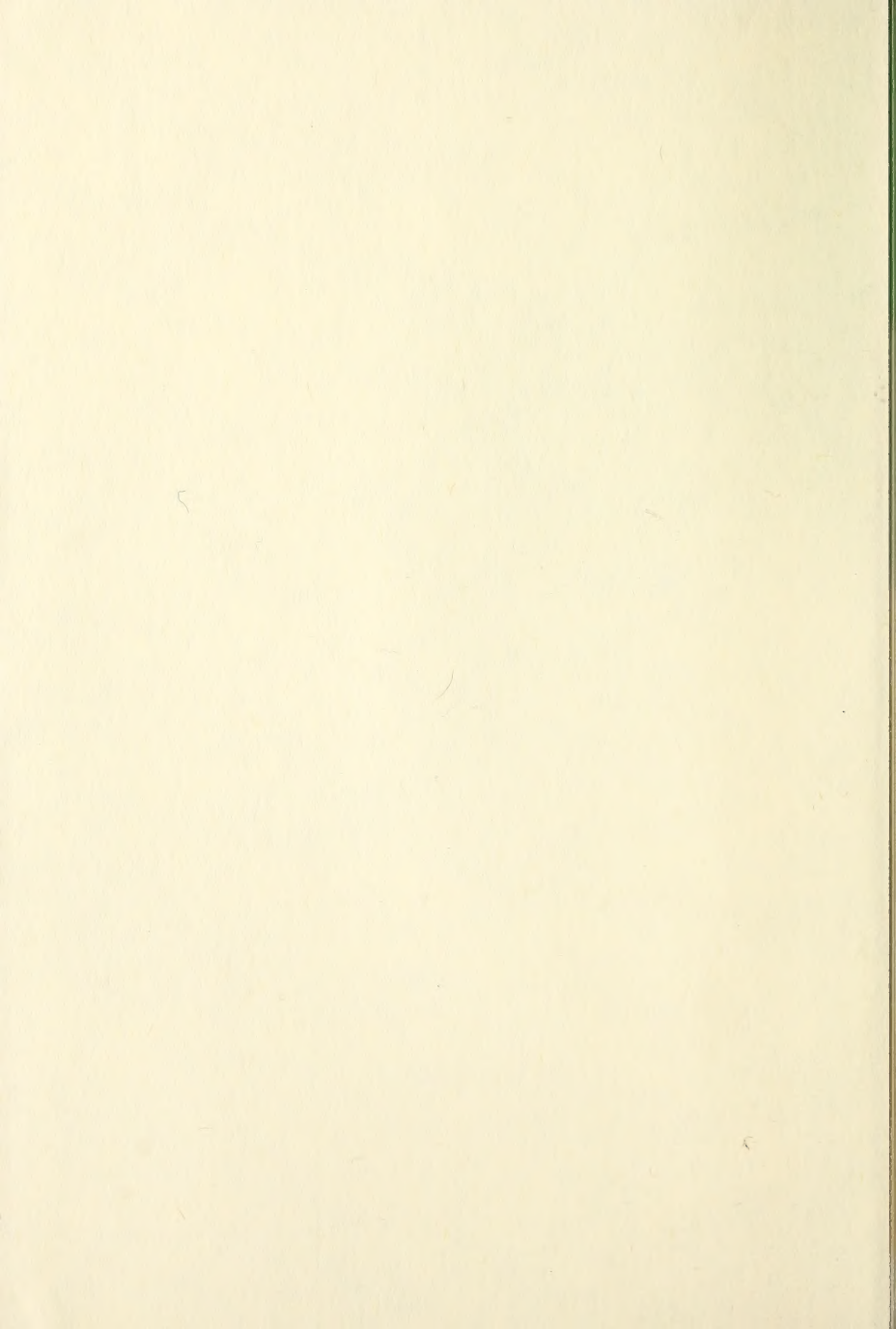
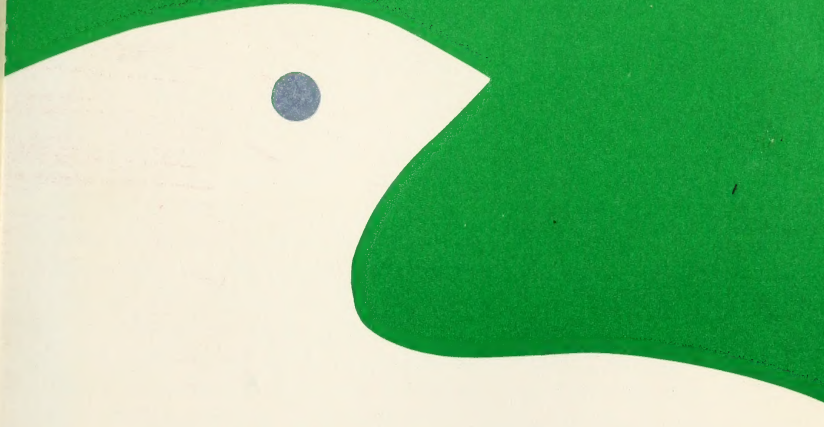




The Passionist





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INTRODUCTION

As Jesus was deeply involved in the lives and deeds of the men and women of his day, so the Passionist Brother today is anxious to serve people in an ever deepening understanding of their actual needs, anxieties and concerns. Brothers are encouraged when remembering that Jesus mingled with his contemporaries, sitting at table with them, attending their feasts and talking with them in their meeting places. Prompted by his great love, Jesus did these things for one purpose; to be of service to them and to let all know of his concern for each individual. Even his death and resurrection was in response to a human need. He mounted the Cross so that his heart's cry might be fulfilled: "If I be lifted up, I shall draw all things to myself" (Jn 12, 32).

Many say that the vocation of the Passionist Brother is in a crisis situation—this may be so, but when we read an overview of the history of religious life we find that there has never been a period which was not regarded by some of its contemporaries as critical. History seems to be made up of one crisis after another. Our own time in history appears to be more serious only because we are in it. This is not an over-simplification but a view that allows us to read between the lines that say *hope* and *trust* and *courage* and *confidence*.

The Church has always experienced great difficulty in remaining contemporary. But her effectiveness, in fact the very question of failure or success in her mission of service depends in large measure upon her ability to adjust to the changing circumstances in which she finds herself. We must not fear, but realize that Jesus is not only the head of the Church, but also Savior of the World. We find Jesus, the divine contemporary, in the very ferment of change. As members of the pilgrim Church we must pass through each successive age and culture with fearless confidence and courage.

The 'sign value' of the religious life of the Passionist Brother must be made comprehensible to the world so that it can understand the witness it gives. The Brother's religious life then, must be lived in a way so relevant to modern man that it is seen as a sign of what the Church is all about and of the radical demands of the Gospel. It is an inherent part of his religious vocation that the Passionist Brother seeks by deeds and words to announce Christ to the world, "The charity of Christ spurs us on (II Cor. 5, 14).

Two events in our Congregation this year gave cause for great joy. The first was the announcement that our renewed Constitutions have been approved by the Holy See, and the second event was the Beatification of *Blessed Brother Isidore, C.P.* by Pope John Paul II in the presence of over 500 Passionists at St. Peter's Square on September 30th. Both these events are related to each other in that our Passionist way of Life has been sanctified by the Church. Our renewed Constitutions bring us into the modern world of Religious Life. The beatification of Blessed Brother Isidore asks us to look closer at the life and ministry of the Brother of our Congregation, especially at a time when we are moving into a new era of Church and Religious Life.

The Theme for the 1984 Annual Meeting of the National Assembly of Religious Brothers (NARB) U.S.A., *Brothers: Creating the Third Millennium*, puts a new responsibility on each of us as we look at our own roots for a better understanding of our present situation, how we have arrived at it and more important how we are to move on to the future.

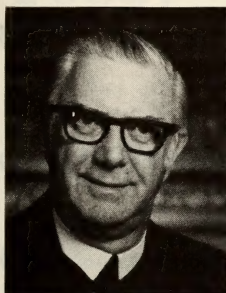
A close look at this present issue of THE PASSIONIST will give some encouragement as we respond to the contemporary needs of the Church, the Congregation and ourselves.

The Brother is encouraged to move into newer models of our Passionist Life and Ministry based on what the past has taught us as we are faithful to the charism of our Founder, St. Paul of the Cross.

Every generation of Passionist Brothers must write a new chapter in the history of the apostolate of our Congregation. If he can apply to himself the words of Vatican II: "United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation" (*Gaudium et Spes*, para. 1); his own response to the Good News of Salvation will be an ever growing determination to bring others the riches of faith and grace which he has received.

It is our confidence in the Gospel which enables us to dedicate ourselves totally to the work of the Lord: "and so, while the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom here are we preaching a Crucified Christ; to the Jews an obstacle that they cannot get over, to the pagans madness, but to those who have been called, whether Jew or Greek, a Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God" (I Cor. 1.23.24.).

Damian Carroll, C.P.



Brother Damian Carroll, C.P., during his 45 years of service to St. Paul of the Cross Province, has had a wide variety of responsibilities. He developed programs for the novice and junior brothers, expedited the Passionist Overseas Mission, and worked as associate director of the Passionist Radio and TV Center. He helped establish the National Assembly of Religious Brothers and is presently the executive secretary for the Preaching Ministry in his province.

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A Context for Ministry Today

The Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating or drinking, but of justice, peace and the joy that is given by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 14:17

One's own personal ministry only makes sense within a sound theology of Church, rooted in a theology of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is essentially the presence of God in individuals, in groups, and in all things. Its effect is that all may be one in justice and love. The Kingdom of God comes into being when God's will is operative. It is both a process and a reality towards which the process is moving. The Kingdom of God is God, God's presence and power, insofar as God is a power to recreate and transform. Richard McBrien says:

The Kingdom of God is the full and perfect manifestation of the redemptive presence of God through which all things are transformed in the name of Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit.¹

The Kingdom of God is past, present, and future, both here and beyond. It is individual, social, and cosmic. God brings about the Kingdom but enlists human participation in its realization.

The Church exists for the sake of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom which comes in the totality of history. In this process, the Church

comes into being as a community gathered together in the risen Jesus. By the power of the Holy Spirit, it is called to facilitate God's saving activity. Therefore, the Church's mission becomes as wide as creation itself. The Church seeks to build up the Kingdom through proclamation in word, sacrament, witness, and service. Although the Church is a divine instrument for transformation, it is not to be equated with the Kingdom. It is at the service of the Kingdom.

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The Church has its origin in God's salvific plan for humankind. However, it exists here in time and is subject to all the limitations of human existence. As William Burrows has so well put it, "the Church was sent into the ambiguity of historical existence, armed with faith, hope, and love, there to puzzle its way through the murky waters of human existence."² The Church is called to wrestle with its meaning in the world, to reflect on it, and re-evaluate it, thus transcending the limits of its previous interpretation. The Holy Spirit remains active in the Church, preventing the Church from slipping into irreversible stagnation. In times of complacency, the Spirit stirs up women and men to come forward and challenge the Church to renewal and reformation. Such was the case with John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

This Council opened up many windows and created a new vision of the Church. This new vision emphasized the fact that the Church exists not alongside the world but within the world, and not in domination over the world but as its servant. Throughout the centuries voices have arisen in the Church seeking to create a dichotomy between the Church's commitment to the Kingdom and to this world. Fortunately, others such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer have proclaimed the necessity of the Church's involvement in society, a necessity that is more and more acknowledged in recent years. Bonhoeffer stated it well:

The Church is the Church only when it exists for others . . . the Church must share in the secular problems of ordinary human life, not dominating, but helping and serving. It must tell men of every calling what it means to live in Christ, to exist for others . . . it must not underestimate the importance of human example. The Church stands, not at the boundaries where human powers give out, but in the middle of the village.³

I wish to locate my understanding of ministry in the context of Vatican II ecclesiology. There are five major points of this ecclesiology that I shall reflect on: the Church as a sacrament; the Church as the people of God; the Church as a collegial reality; the body of Christ as being constituted by many churches; and finally, the Church as servant. All affect my understanding of ministry today.

In the principle enunciated in the first chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, the Church is, first and foremost, a mystery or sacrament.⁴ In fact it is the fundamental sacrament of our encounter with God. A sacrament is a sign of God's hidden presence—an efficacious sign. It is a sign of God and a sign of our unity with each other. The sign should reflect that presence as best as possible. The quality of the sign is important. As a sign of God's presence the Church is ever in need of reform so that it can show God's presence ever more effectively in the world. For instance, the Kingdom of God is a Kingdom of justice. The Church should present itself to the world as a model of justice. It should preach it outside and practice it within. The Church ought not send out contradictory signals, calling for justice in certain segments of society and yet not always responding to it within. The Canon Law Society of America has stated that:

It would be unfortunate if, while civil society labored to build an effective and independent system for the protection of rights, the Church allowed itself to remain at a lower stage in the development of adequate safeguards for the protection of human rights. The ferment of the gospel, which is especially active in the Church of our time, is arousing in the hearts of Christians an irresistible demand that the human dignity of each member of the faithful should be recognized and protected by suitable legal guarantees.⁵

The gospel that we preach is one of freedom. The various ministries of Christians are all directed towards the liberation and transformation of the total person. In a rapidly changing world that is growing more complex every day, there is need to explore every avenue that can offer more effective ways of proclaiming the Kingdom. Theological reflection and ministerial experimentation are important. The result is sometimes seen as contrary to the gospel message. Fidelity is needed, and legitimate authority has the right to challenge and discern what is valid or not. However, the principle of responsible dissent needs to be not only respected but also encouraged. A healthy tension can ensue. Christians have basic rights, such as due process. In a once monolithic Church that is exhibiting signs of unprecedented change, it is important that human rights be safeguarded. The mission of the Church would be severely crippled if they were not.



Secondly, *Lumen Gentium*, in its second chapter, presents the Church as being constituted by the whole people of God.⁶ We are moving from a static, hierarchical, institutional model of Church to one that is pluralistic, in dynamic tension, and rooted in the community of the baptized. Indeed, through Baptism all are incorporated into the saving mission of the Church. Joseph Powers stresses the fact that "the Christian in the world is the basic sacrament."⁷ This has tremendous ramifications in the practical order. I would like to reflect on a few of these interrelated issues.

As people of God, all Christians are responsible for the life and ministry of the Church. Laity can no longer be seen as merely associates or sharers in the ordained ministry. If all are responsible, then all should be involved in planning and decision making. Who makes decisions? How are they elected? To whom are they accountable? These are major questions. Power should be shared proportionally according to the degree of involvement, responsibility, and competence. This should be done on local and regional levels and also on an international and Church-wide level.

A second pertinent issue is the growing estrangement on the part of people from traditional forms of local parish life. I believe that there is a pressing need to evaluate these structures and experiment with new ones. The basic community model which seeks to use meaningful sociological units as the basis for building Christian community could offer us insights. Units, such as professionals with a common voca-

tional concern, would then become centers of worship and praxis replacing the more traditional parish units. Burrow states:

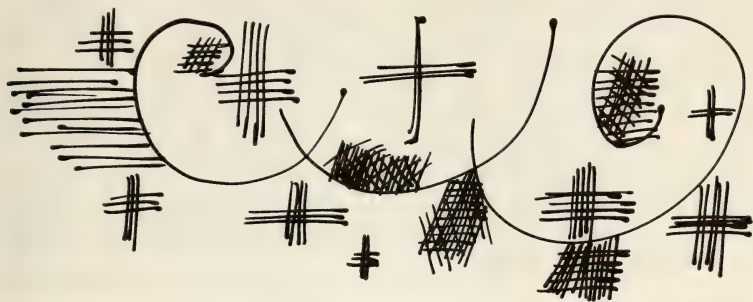
The strategy of the Church should be one of identifying basic communities which already exist, and then developing forms of ministry which will allow these already existing communities to become the model and locus of the Church . . . the upshot . . . would be a restructuring of the local church at the grassroots in order to help people to understand better the meaning of the gospel and to offer them the empowerment of the Spirit to transform their daily lives.⁸

Finally, there is the long overdue and highly sensitive issue of women in the Church. The myth of male dominance in society is coming to an end. If the Church expects to have a role in the shaping of the international women's movement, it must show that it is really serious about enfranchising women in its own life. Ordained ministry is a specific issue. I believe, however, that the umbrella issue is the question of full and equal membership, a question of full participation in planning and decision-making. Thus far, the Church has been making token gestures towards women while keeping power in the hands of men—basically the ordained ministers. A call for change is sounding in our world today. Basic to it is the need for a good theology of the human person, a theology of equality for the sexes. What Philip Keane calls "pedestalism" needs to be addressed. He says:

Pedestalism is hard to combat because it seems to say good things about women and because many women are quite happy to be placed on pedestals so that they do not have to take their full responsibility for human life and the human future.⁹

As long as a poor theology of the human person dominates the thinking of both women and men, the crucial role of women in shaping Church and society is greatly restricted. Action flows from changes in attitude. As the educative process regarding a more insightful theology of the human person develops, there should be a corresponding process of incorporating women into all areas of planning and decision-making in the Church. This can be done not only on a local and diocesan level but also on an international and Church-wide

level. An example would be the appointment of a substantial number of women to leadership positions in the Roman Curia.



The third point of Vatican II ecclesiology, also found in chapter two of *Lumen Gentium*, is that the Church is a collegial reality.¹⁰ This implies a balance between local and universal church and this entails a need for decentralization. I believe that it calls for a re-assessment of the relationship of all orders of ministry to each other. On the local level, there should be a variety of ministries according to the need of that community. All baptized women and men should be involved. Ordained ministry is an essential function, but it should be seen as one among many. The ordained minister presides at Eucharist and has the role of teaching, preaching, counseling, and guiding the local community. There should be a process whereby the local community is involved in the selection of its pastor.

The Bishop is the leader of the Christian community in a given diocese. He is called to proclaim the gospel by word and sacrament, by teaching and governing for the building up of the community. He is a sign and symbol of the unity of the local church and its relationship to the universal church. Because of the intimate link between bishop and local church, there should be initiated an elective process whereby the bishop, subject to Papal confirmation, is chosen from and by a representative body of the local church. The bishop functions best when he is in on-going dialogue with the leaders of the local communities. The diocesan church is a microcosm of the universal church. It does not

exist in isolation from, but rather in communion with, the other diocesan churches. Mutual collaboration is essential for the churches in order to show forth the unity of Christ and to further the spread of the Kingdom. Regular gatherings of regional bishops, as is presently done, is important. I also see the regular gathering of representatives of the various ministries of these same regions as most helpful.

The various bishops, in communion with each other, form a college with the Bishop of Rome as their head. The role and function of the Petrine office has gradually evolved over the centuries. Due to a variety of historical, cultural, and theological factors, it has become highly monarchical. It, too, needs to continue to develop in order to be better able to serve the entire Church. Burrows aptly summarizes my thoughts when he says:

Papal ministry is a positive and creative office. Its basic function is to symbolize the worldwide global unity of Christians and to help men and women of many nations expand their horizons to the cosmic dimensions of Christian movement. It's a helping ministry, directing efforts to aid local churches grow in the Spirit of Christ.¹¹

A more representative body for the selection of Popes would be in keeping with the emphasis on the collegial nature of the Church. These various ministries are to work in harmony for the sake of the Kingdom, not lording it over each other. While the Church has a needed institutional dimension about it, the emphasis must be placed on community and mutual service.

The fourth ecclesiological point is that of ecumenism. By acknowledging the ecclesial reality of other Christian communities, the Decree on Ecumenism sets aside the pre-Vatican II concept that the Roman Church alone is the one and true church.¹² In reality many churches constitute the body of Christ, although they are not all equal. We can no longer live in suspicion and isolation from each other working at cross purposes. We are now beginning to form genuine relationships. Gregory Baum states it well:

New and startling as Vatican II was the acknowledgement of other Christian churches as churches . . . What ecumenism means . . . is a movement of dialogue and cooperation between the churches seeking greater fidelity to Christ and enlarging the common ground between them. This

movement is destined to transform the self-understanding of the churches until the differences that separate them no longer justify the existing division.¹³

I believe that the Spirit is at work among all Christians, nudging us along the path of reconciliation. The Kingdom of God is greater than any of the churches or, for that matter, all of them combined. We exist for the sake of the Kingdom. We need to become Christians to each other, that is, to reach out to each other in love.

Twenty years have passed since John XXIII convoked the second Vatican Council. The Church is still very much in process of re-defining itself and expanding its vision of ministry. The challenge of those in ministry is to assist the Church in this process so that the Kingdom of God may be more fully manifest.

Action flows
from changes
in attitude.

Finally, the Church is a servant Church. In *Gaudium et Spes* the Church's solidarity with the whole human family is stressed.¹⁴ Its service is oriented towards the Kingdom of God, and as such, necessarily seeks the transformation of this world. Rosemary Haughton says, "If God's action in history transforms reality, it transforms social reality."¹⁵ I believe that there is no form of service which is closed to Christian ministry. Time, place, circumstances, and a discernment process dictate what is needed. My own particular commitment to ministry with older adults is an expression of the Church as servant. The American Bishops have stated the issue as follows:

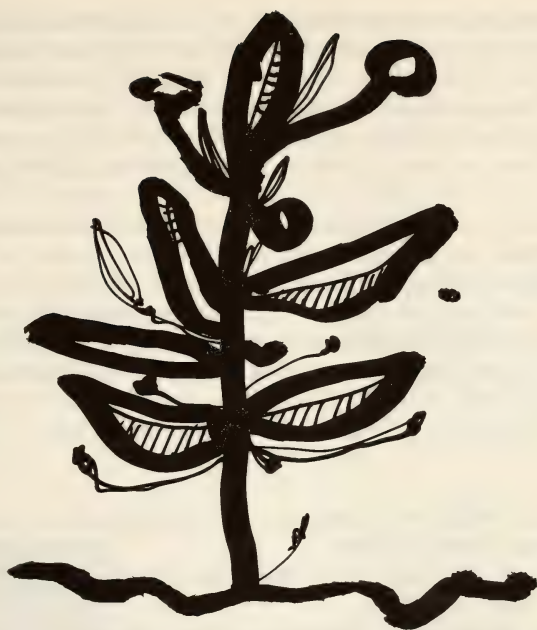
Healing the rupture between society and its elderly members requires a major effort to change attitudes as well as social structures. In undertaking this task we are not simply meeting the demands of charity and justice. We

are accepting our own humanity, our link with past and future and, thereby, our link with the Creator. To do this is to add new life to the final states of growth because Christ said, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10).¹⁶

The Bishops acknowledge that old age has fallen into disrepute in our society. We are an age-denying, death-denying, youth-oriented society. This false self is bolstered by the very structures and mentalities which support our socio-economic world. Robert Butler, one of our nation's leading gerontologists, has accused our society of flagrant ageism. By this he means a process of systematic stereotyping of, and discrimination against, people because they are old. Butler maintains that ageism allows younger people to see older people as different from themselves; thus they subtly cease to identify with their elders as human beings.¹⁷

Older adults have both "bread needs" and "more than bread needs." The Church needs to be a strong advocate for older adults who are victimized by the socio-economic structures of our society. Adequate food, housing, medical, and social needs are among top priorities. Beyond the "bread needs" are loneliness, rejection, alienation, lack of meaning and other emotional and spiritual traumas that have made the suicide rate among our elderly scandalously high.¹⁸ Specialized ministry with and for older adults is needed on all levels of church life. Ageism has to be refuted. The Church needs to defend the value of human life in all stages of the life cycle.

For fourteen years my ministry has centered around older adults. I have engaged in home and hospital visitation and the programming of various religious, educational, and social events. I have acted as advocate, and I have stood by the ailing and the dying. I have been exposed to some tragic situations of aging in our society. There is more to the picture, however, for reflection on my experience tells me that the great contribution that older adults can make to society is to pass on to the next generation a sense of meaning to life, a sense of strength and courage. Older adults can be sacraments of hope to a younger generation. Young people—young Passionist religious!—need to know by word, deed, and example that life, and the living of it is possible. One can grow old gracefully, joyfully, and fulfilled as a Christian (and as a religious).



All women and men have to come to terms with the mystery of suffering in their own lives and in the lives of others. There is never really a satisfying answer. We are faced with mystery; the cross is a reality. The older adult who appreciates his or her sacramentality is in a position to wrestle with this mystery and convey strength, insight, and faith to those who will follow. I believe that older Passionists, in particular, have much to offer us. By vow they have made the Passion story their own particular story; they have been incorporated into it and have spent their lives coming to terms with its implications both for themselves and for humankind.

We are living in an aging society. Gerontologists speak about the graying of America. The implications for ministry are only beginning to be appreciated. First of all, the Church needs to examine its own ageist attitudes. Many do not care to minister to the elderly and dying. On the local level, the elderly are sometimes patronized or treat-

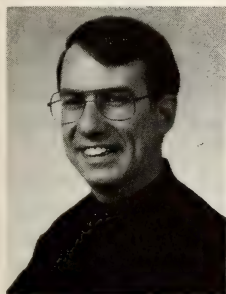
ed condescendingly rather than listened to as mature adults. The fact is that many older adults can contribute much in time, wisdom, and experience to the life of the Church on all levels. Secondly, there are also some who are dependent and need the care and vigilance of the Church. I am particularly concerned about those who are institutionalized and have no one to check on them. The role of advocacy is crucial.

I find value in all models of the Church that I have studied, but I have a definite preference for the model of the Church as Servant. Walking in the footsteps of Jesus, the Church seeks to be attentive to all women and men who suffer, especially the marginal. In our society, the aged are numbered among the marginal; it is with these poor that I cast my lot, seeking to make more present the Kingdom of God.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism*, 2 vols. (Minneapolis, Mn.: Winston Press, 1980), 2:1104.
- 2 William R. Burrows, *New Ministries* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1981), p. 85.
- 3 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 382, p. 282.
- 4 "Lumen Gentium," *Vatican Council II Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (Northport, N.Y.: Costello Publishing, 1975), no. 1, p. 350.
- 5 "Report of the Canon Law Society of America to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops on the subject of Due Process," *Readings, Cases, Materials in Canon Law*, eds. Jordan F. Hite, Genaro J. Sesto, and Daniel J. Ward (Collegeville, Mn.: Liturgical Press, 1980), p. 276.
- 6 Vatican Council II Documents, *Lumen Gentium*, pp. 359-369.
- 7 Joseph Powers, notes from a lecture on Sacramental Theology.
- 8 Burrows, *New Ministries*, pp. 20-21.
- 9 Philip Keane, *Sexual Morality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977) pp. 23-24.
- 10 Vatican Council II Documents, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 26, pp. 381-382.
- 11 Burrows, *New Ministries*, p. 149.

- 12 Vatican Council II Documents, *Decree on Ecumenism*, pp. 452-478.
- 13 Gregory Baum, *The Credibility of the Church Today* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), p. 52.
- 14 Vatican Council II Documents, *Gaudium et Spes*, pp. 902-1014.
- 15 Rosemary Haughton, *The Passionate God* (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), p. 178.
- 16 Catholic Bishops of the United States, *Society and the Aged: Toward Reconciliation* (Washington, D.C.: USCC Publications, 1976), p. 10.
- 17 Robert N. Butler, *Why Survive? Being Old in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 12.
- 18 According to William O'Rourke, Professor of Gerontology at Northern Essex College, at the Fourth Annual New England Gerontology Forum, Boston, September 23, 1982, the highest rate of suicide in the United States occurs among older adults in their eighties.



Brother Gordon Mathieu, C.P. has a rich and varied background in administration, pastoral ministry, religious education and formation. Since June, 1983, he has been director of St. Michael's Residence, a pre-novitiate college program for Passionist candidates located in Worcester, MA.

Circular Letter on the Occasion of the Beatification of Blessed Isidore De Loor, C.P.

Dear Brethren:

Let us give joyful thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give Him thanks and praise. These sentiments of the Eucharistic Preface were surely echoed in every Passionist heart when we heard the blessed news that Pope John Paul II will declare Blessed our Brother Isidore De Loor on September 30 of this year.

We offer fraternal congratulations to the religious of Saint Gabriel Province, for it was in Belgium and in their communities that Isidore was formed in the Passionist spirit. In a more fundamental sense, however, Isidore belongs to all Passionists. We all rejoice and give thanks to God for this grace given to our Congregation. This beatification prompts us to reflect again on the great gift which has been given to us in our Passionist vocation.

With this letter I wish to share with you some reflections on the life of Brother Isidore and to suggest some thoughts on the nature and role of the brother in our community today.

Isidore as a Passionist

Each one of us is a complex variety of attitudes and actions. Like many deeply dedicated persons, Isidore manifests a seemingly para-

doxical variety of virtues and values marvelously integrated into one shining life. As different biographies of Isidore are published, authors will probably emphasize varying aspects of his life and spirituality. One may emphasize the pervading contemplative aspects of his union with God: "he was recollected; he lived in God" (1); ". . . a profound recollection"; "that man was never dissipated" (2). Others might note how, even as a layman, he was generous with his working talents by helping needy neighbors with their farms (3), just as he was universally helpful later on in the monastery. Then there will be human touches: Isidore "always had a smile on his lips, a smile ever ready to burst into laughter" (4), or that the other novices wondered how long it would take the master of novices to tell Isidore to shave his moustache (5).

Throughout his religious
life Isidore continued
to imitate the self-
emptying generosity
of Christ. +

However, beneath the impressive variety of human and religious values manifested by Isidore, his sense of total dedication was the basic quality of his life as a Passionist. Before entering the novitiate Isidore was already a devout, apostolic christian. But from his entry into the novitiate he dedicated himself totally to God. He came to the community "not for money or for any worldly motive, but to do the will of God . . ." (6). Shortly after his religious profession he wrote: "Now that I am consecrated entirely to God and bound to our Congregation for my whole life, I feel so at peace and so happy" (7). This

sense of total dedication remained the outstanding quality of his life as a Passionist. It was evident in his response to all the circumstances of his life: his punctuality in arriving for every act of religious observance; his fidelity to prayer; his minute attention to every prescription of our Constitutions, Regulations and Customs; his tranquil acceptance of human characteristics in Superiors and companions. His dedication was manifested in his hard and careful work as gardener, as cook for a community of ninety, as porter and in questing. That dedication continued strong as he bore the sufferings of terminal cancer. Even toward the end of his life he asked a daily remembrance in the prayers of his family, "that I might fulfill as perfectly as possible what I have promised" (8).

That total dedication to God was the source of his absorption of the Passionist spirit and charism. Those who knew him spoke of him as an incarnation of this spirit: "He was a Passionist, heart and soul"; "Animated by the spirit of his Father and Founder, he felt 'at home' as a Passionist"; "He was animated by the special mission of our Congregation" (9). Every prayer and every activity of Isidore's consecrated life was dynamized by his clear understanding of what it meant to be a Passionist. He wrote:

To preach the word of God and to work at promoting the holy and sorrowful Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is the special reason why our Order exists, and to draw the hearts of believers to Jesus Crucified where they will find consolation in all the circumstances of life. You can well see how important are our work and our efforts, and I want only to use my energies in fulfilling that purpose. If it is necessary, I am ready for the greatest sacrifice and to give my life to that end (10).

Nor did Isidore worry about differences of work or ministry. His attitude was typical of Passionist brothers then and now. He was "united with the Fathers, working for the same end" (11). As a novice he had summed it all up quite simply: "Reflecting on the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ is what our Order is all about" (12).

Throughout his religious life Isidore continued to imitate the self-emptying generosity of Christ. In community life he found ample occasion for mortification and self-discipline. On entering the novitiate he encountered a culture strikingly different from that which he had known. Even the languages of the community — Latin for prayers and

French for all else—were alien to him. By accepting and striving to adjust, physically and psychologically, to his new environment and new expectations, Isidore was emptying himself in order to permit the new life of a Passionist to develop in him. "Only by self-emptying in encounter with what is alien, different and strange, does a man achieve self-hood" (13).

Isidore's own letters and the many witnesses in the two volumes of the Process for his Beatification demonstrate that through his fidelity in prayer three themes developed as dominant, motivating aspects of his religious life: the Passion of Christ, the Will of God, the prospect of Heaven.

Each of these dominant themes was, of course, lived out in a specific context of cultural and social patterns, of religious structures and religious practices, of family and religious community relationships which were somewhat different from our own. But they were as authentic and actual for Isidore as our context is for us. We should recall that, after careful scrutiny, the Church has declared Isidore's manner of living his Passionist vocation within those specific contexts as involving an *heroic* practice of virtue (14). Isidore did not waste his life waiting for ideal times or perfect Superiors or a model community. He lived the Passionist manner of life in the world and situation in which he found himself and he lived it in an heroic manner. As his local Superior wrote to Isidore's parents after his death: "He lived as a saint and he died as one. That is how I would put it" (15). Isidore was thirty-five years old.

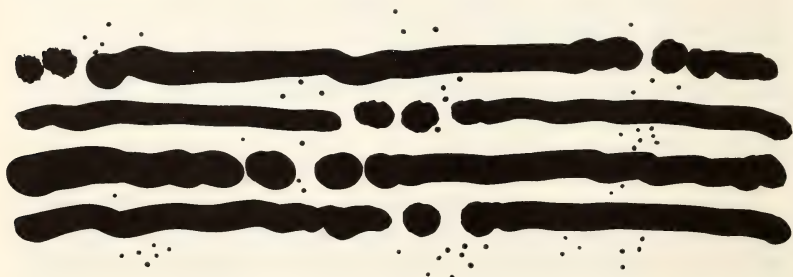
Manifesting Values

Evangelical values, including those characteristic of our Passionist spirit, will be manifested in many manners in differing cultures and ages. In a number of ways the context of Isidore's life is different from our own. Many of us have seen extraordinarily rapid cultural changes within the past few decades.

But while the expressions of evangelical values will vary, the values remain the same and religious of every culture and era are called upon to live them in a way which is compellingly believable to their contemporaries. Intimate personal union with Jesus, self-emptying obedience, profound humility and generous service remain cornerstones of christian and religious life.

We have all seen these virtues manifested in truly marvelous manners by an impressive number of our religious. Reading the life of Brother Isidore will remind us of saintly and lovable brothers we have known. We have been privileged to live among saints, with spiritual giants. Some may say that the way in which these heroic Passionists expressed their love for God and for their neighbor is not convincing and inspiring to modern man. This may, perhaps, be correct. Certainly, some of their responses seem strange to today's religious. Nevertheless, I am not so sure that the evidence of outstanding love is not convincing even to moderns. Brother Isidore's life, I believe, is striking proof to the most modern believers of great holiness. The crowds that flock to his shrine seem eloquent testimony to that.

Whatever the particular modality of expression, it is essential that these evangelical Passionist values be authentically manifested in our personal and community lives. What is humility today? How does a truly humble religious act today? Clearly, one aspect is a grateful acknowledgement of his dignity as a person and of the gifts which he has received from the Lord. But does not this sense of appreciation and gratitude urge him to place all these gifts at the service of others? In the first place, should they not be at the full disposition of his religious family?



Brother Isidore was devoted to the Sacred Passion before he entered the Congregation. He regularly performed the devotion of the Stations of the Cross. It may have been this devotion which prompted his Redemptorist confessor to direct him to our Congregation. Once Isidore entered the community he made the Stations of the Cross a regular part of his life. Like many of our religious, especially the brothers, Isidore prayed the Stations of the Cross every day. What

means do we use today to nourish and manifest our grateful memory of the Passion? What are our community expressions of this central theme of our life? Are we open to growth by being willing to encounter what is alien, different and strange (16)? Or do we close ourselves to growth through fear of living or studying in a different culture or of transferring to a new community and apostolate?

Isidore's punctuality in arriving for every act of religious observance and his minute attention to every prescription not only of the Constitutions and Regulations but of the Custom Book may seem excessive to some. Some may view such minute and detailed exactness as compulsive or intransigent. Possibly such punctuality and fidelity may be excessive, at least in our time. But how does one manifest today an heroic degree of obedience to the Constitutions and Regulations of the Congregation? Surely an attitude which judges that they are norms to be observed when it is convenient or when one agrees with their prudence will not be seen as a manifestation of self-emptying obedience. All would agree with that. But the question remains and it is one which each of us, individually and as a local, provincial and congregational community must answer. What are our ideals regarding obedience today? What are modern models of ideal Passionist manifestations of religious obedience? What are credible, even striking exemplifications of the humble obedience of Christ today? In what concrete ways can we express our ideal of religious obedience today? What would be a truly heroic manifestation of religious obedience in daily life?

For Brother Isidore and many other holy Passionists a faithful, exact and prompt fulfillment of the various prescriptions of our legislation or of the directives of Superiors was an ideal. Is this still our ideal? How would we formulate this ideal today? These are important, indeed fundamental, questions which the beatification of Brother Isidore suggests.

Fidelity in making our daily prayer is difficult for most of us. How many times we have had to force ourselves to make at least the minimum of an hour of mental prayer. Without a regular time for such prayer, few succeed in being faithful. Eloquent and prudent are the reasons often adduced against a prescribed time for community mental prayer and, at one period, I have voiced some of these reasons myself. But the experience of the Congregation is eloquent testimony to

our human weakness. Rare is the community where a notable majority of the religious are faithful to this daily minimum of mental prayer if the time of meditation is not an act of common observance.

We all experience difficulties at mental prayer. Isidore also knew days of dryness. "One day this meditation goes very well and then the next day very poorly. But I can't omit my mental prayer for that reason and I continue to apply myself with renewed courage" (17). Many of us need the help of a horarium and the support of our fellow religious to be faithful.

Our reflection on the life of Brother Isidore should be an occasion for personal and communal review on the ways in which individuals and communities today might be able to manifest an heroic expression of these and other unchanging values of our Passionist life.

Brother's Vocation

In a particular way, however, I would like to use this occasion to help all of us consider attentively the nature and role of the Passionist brother's vocation. Our last General Chapter recommended (18) that provinces and vicariates reflect on the theme of brothers in our Congregation. A study document on this topic had been prepared for the General Chapter (19) and the Chapter urged all to study it. I hope my remarks may, in some measure, contribute to both personal and communal reflections on this important aspect of our life.



Nature of Congregation

The contributions of our brothers to community life and apostolate seem irreplaceable. Without their unique contributions our Congregation would not merely be the poorer; I believe it would not be the

same. When I speak of the Congregation being poorer without brothers, I am not thinking in material terms. To understand the role of brothers in an utilitarian or economic sense would be a profound profanation of this gift of God. Nevertheless, it may not be completely out of place to observe that when it becomes necessary to substitute a secular worker for a brother, normally it takes the average annual income of three or four priests to pay for these services.

The real contribution of a brother to our Congregation is his person. His consecration to service is a gift of God to the Church and to our Congregation. It is not a question of the services performed by these consecrated members. More profoundly, it concerns the very nature of our Congregation as a family of lay and clerical members. The presence of lay religious touches intimately the very constitutional nature of our Institute (20). The presence of lay religious living and manifesting the memory of the Passion is an integral part of our charism and mission. The presence of lay christians as equal members of our family seems to be an essential aspect of the witness and message we are called to proclaim. The advanced average age of our brothers and the alarming paucity of vocations to this ecclesial state, especially in Europe and North America, should be of profound concern to all of us as it touches the heart of our life.

Contribution of Brothers

Our Congregation as such and in its every part is fully a christian community to the extent that each member lives the triple dimension of communion (*koinonia*), service (*diaconia*) and mission (*kerygma*). This triple aspect of christian life is not only centripetal, centering on the inner life of the Congregation, but is also centrifugal, racing outward towards all of humanity. Without the presence of brothers each of these three dimensions in their centripetal and centrifugal force would be notably weakened.

Koinonia Our life is to be one of communion; it is to be a complete sharing. We share not merely material resources, but much more importantly, our life. We are present to and for each other. We share our time, our talents, our faith. Such sharing should be expressed by each Passionist, but the presence of the brother in community is frequently a more manifest and a more striking manifestation of this *koinonia* than that of other members. The role of the brother is more

clearly a *koinonia* at the disposition of the community in order to strengthen it, support it and build it up. Without this particular *koinonia* of our brothers it is difficult to conceive of our Congregation as having that fundamental sharing of time, of talents or of life which is regarded as an integral element of the fraternity we profess and proclaim. While some of these services may be performed by secular persons, they do not make the same contribution to *koinonia*. Without Passionist brothers our witness to communion would not be as rich or complete.

Diaconia Each member of our Congregation is called to a life of service, but the brother is the most striking example of *diaconia* to the Congregation. He exemplifies service not merely within the Congregation, but is frequently the most believable expression of service to those outside our religious family.

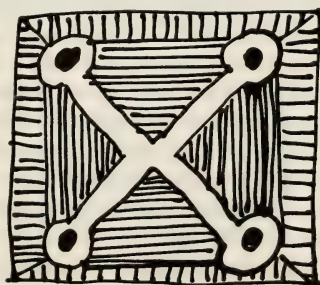
The diaconal service of a brother is normally evidenced by domestic and technical roles, but the quality of *diaconia* comes from the evident fact of its being an expression of love. Looking at the daily service by a Passionist brother, no one can reasonably doubt that the source and purpose of such service is love. Humanly speaking there is no other explanation or motivation. We are all called to be servants of each other, to wash each other's feet. But nowhere is this attitude of service incarnated in a more believable manner than in the life of our brothers. A cheerful brother is a striking exemplification of this attitude of *diaconia* which ought to animate each of us. Saint Paul of the Cross expressed this fact of *diaconia* by referring to the brothers as the center or heart of the community.

Kerygma Proclamation of the Good News must be within the religious family as well as to other members of the family of God. Proclamation of the Good News is the food which nourishes our faith. Pope Paul VI reminded us that the Church itself must be "evangelized if it is to conserve its freshness and its strength in announcing the gospel" (21). This is at least equally true of the Passionist Congregation. One part of this internal *kerygma* is a verbal expression of our faith, through community dialogue and preaching at our Eucharist. Unfortunately, both of these means are widely disregarded today in our communities. But another expression of *kerygma* is what used to be called "good example." Today we more commonly call it witness or testimony. In this regard the contribution of our brothers is also out-

standing. The impressive witness of their lives is truly a kerygma to the other members of the Congregation as well as to those outside of the religious family. Those of us living in affluent societies readily denounce the materialism and consumerism which dominates our cultures but, as a general statement, is it not the brothers in our Congregation who give the more impressive and believable examples of simplicity of life?

Internally, the most dangerous and destructive attitude in our Congregation is undoubtedly a spirit of activism. By their adherence to the religious observance our brothers not only sustain the structure of our community life, but continue to proclaim the essential aspect of contemplation in our life.

I do not wish to give the impression that only brothers proclaim these fundamental spiritual values or, even less, that this kerygmatic service is unique to them. This is a dimension which should be common to each Passionist and I am deeply conscious of the great zeal of very many of our priests in proclaiming the Good News. But, in highlighting the apostolic contribution of the brother in this kerygma I believe I am merely commenting on a recognized reality throughout the Congregation. The life of our brothers is a tremendous enrichment of our communities.



Liturgy

When speaking of the Liturgy of the Hours our Constitutions make no distinction between brother and cleric. Rather they say: "All the

religious are committed to making the celebration a worthy and fruitful experience of community prayer" (22). Obviously, it should be understood that a brother trained for years for another style of prayer will not feel obliged to attempt a difficult adjustment to a new style of communal prayer. As a matter of record, however, our brothers in all parts of the Congregation responded quickly to the promptings of the Second Vatican Council and almost spontaneously joined with the clerics in this prayer of praise. Our Constitutions are merely confirming what our brothers had already chosen.

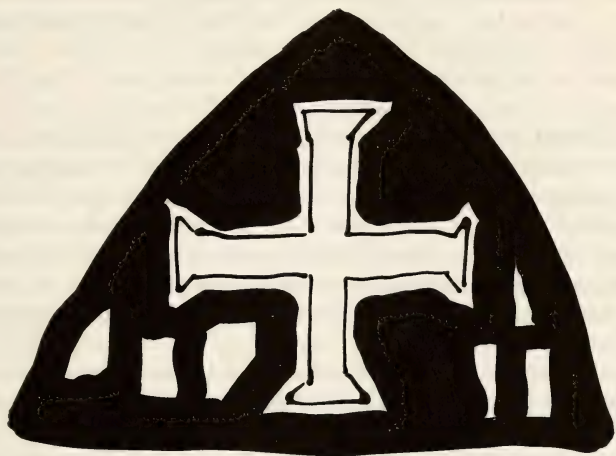
Regrettably, the insertion of our brothers into the community Eucharistic celebration has not been as universally successful. Some celebrants of the Eucharist seem unaware of the proper role of others in this community act of worship. In some provinces little catechesis was given on the various roles to be observed during the Eucharist. Our reflection on the role of the brother should include a study of the diverse functions of the various participants in a Eucharistic celebration and a call to each to assume his proper ministry. Not only is this liturgically and theologically correct, but it may help to moderate the sense of exclusion some brothers feel when the community Mass involves a visual phalanx of celebrants and only one or two brothers present.

Apostolic Mission

We can hardly remind ourselves too often that a Passionist brother has the same vocation as the non-lay members of the Congregation. "All of us, whether cleric or brother, share the same Passionist vocation by which we live in community as sons of the same Father" (23). For all of us, our primary apostolate is our manner of living our Passionist religious life. "What counts most is not what religious *do* but what they *are* as persons consecrated to the Lord" is a theme often repeated by Pope John Paul II (24).

Historically and today the majority of our brothers perform a domestic service as their apostolic ministry. But some religious may be unaware of the rich history of direct apostolic ministry performed by our brothers. Most notable in this regard is the spiritual contribution made by brothers who went on the quest. They listened patiently to the human and spiritual problems of people, offering them prudent advice, spiritual counsel and christian consolation. This was an im-

portant part of the apostolate of questing. It still is a much appreciated ministry in the few places which continue questing. When the brother is unable to make his annual visit to a family, they call the monastery to ask why he has not come to visit them. Not infrequently people who have been visited on the quest come to see brother during the year to discuss with him some personal or family problem.



At the time of Paul of the Cross it was a rigid social requirement that a religious never travel alone. So, when one of the priests would otherwise be travelling alone, a brother would accompany him. Sometimes a brother would go on a mission to assist the missionaries by preparing their meals for them (25). Brothers have been part of our mission activity "ad extra" for over 100 years, performing a variety of domestic, developmental, educational, health and pastoral services.

Brothers whose principal ministry was a domestic one also engaged in more direct pastoral activities. Our history, early and recent, is filled with examples of brothers who developed a cordial pastoral relationship with lay persons. Men who worked for the community, neighbors, benefactors, people who did business with the community

often spoke to a brother of their sufferings and spiritual problems, receiving encouragement, support and the effective advice of a man experienced in the ways of God. Many brothers as Porters have received human and spiritual confidences from the faithful who have sought their advice and assistance. So, while it is correct to say that the majority of our brothers performed a domestic ministry, it would be inaccurate to maintain that such domestic service was the only ministry proper to our brothers. Other types of apostolic service by brothers have a long and constant tradition in the Congregation.

The decree *Perfectae Caritatis* (26) states that brothers "should be associated with the life and work of the community." Pope Paul VI expressed the hope that brothers would "become more directly involved in the life and activities of the community" (27). Our Constitutions not merely avoid making any distinctions between lay and non-lay members when speaking of our apostolate (28), but several times repeat the theme that "we all participate in the apostolate in the manner best suited to our talents and situations" (29). Our Regulations are even more explicit in stating that the brothers "exercise their gifts in the various community and apostolic works of the Congregation" (30).

During the past four decades there has been a concentrated effort in many provinces to provide our young lay religious with an adequate theological and professional preparation. Reflecting changes in society at large, many provinces have the same educational requirements for the entrance of brother candidates into the community as they have for those pursuing clerical studies. In some areas our brothers follow the 4 or 5 year theologate program before beginning their proper ministry as professed brothers. But whether in courses such as these or other educational and professional preparation, there is a complementarity of background which enhances both our community life and ministry.

In the last two decades the field of apostolic involvement open to our brothers has become as inclusive as that open to our priests, obviously excluding activities which require sacred orders. These apostolic ministries must be in conformity with the purpose of our Institute and the requirements of community life. This norm is equally true for all of us, lay and non-lay members. Brothers may be liturgical animators, choir directors, parish helpers, youth organizers, ecu-

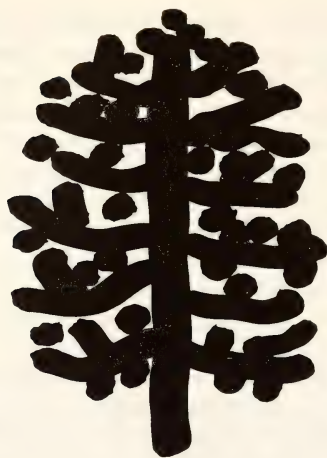
menical directors, radio or television directors, hospital visitors, masters of novices and perform other similar services. Today we have brothers who are spiritual directors, catechists, lecturers, teachers, retreat house directors, vocational animators, local superiors, economies, provincial consultants, editors of periodicals, to mention a few new ministries. In at least one area our brothers preach retreats to the faithful (31). It would be a mistake to consider these ministries as alien to a brother's role in the Congregation or, even worse, as exclusively clerical activities.

Fraternity

From the day of our entrance into the novitiate we have heard of the strong spirit of fraternity which ought to characterize our relations with all members of the Passionist family. Paul of the Cross was insistent on this essential aspect. In letters, visitation decrees, chapter enactments and in discourses to the religious, Paul insisted on mutual charity and equality for all in the Institute. In this matter of equality Paul was relatively unique. He did not follow the common practice of other religious Institutes. There was only one master of novices and the novitiate was common for all. Recreation was common to clerics and brothers. There was no distinction in the religious habit. All ate together in the same refectory and there was to be absolutely no difference in the food served nor in the care or medicine provided the sick (32).

The Process for Paul's Beatification and Canonization reports that the Founder frequently spoke of his love for the brothers and his appreciation of their role in community life. "Believe me, if any one in the Congregation does not love them (the brothers), he does not have the spirit of Jesus Christ" (33).

Our Congregation was relatively unique in the degree of equality for our brothers and their insertion into the life of the community. Perhaps because of this long tradition, the Congregation moved quickly after the Second Vatican Council to remove the last vestiges of distinction or barriers to a total equality of rights and responsibilities within the community. The only distinctions remaining are sacramental and the canonical requirement that a clerical Institute be "under the supervision of clerics" (34).



Conversion

A change of legislation and structures, however, does not necessarily bring an alteration of feelings or a conversion of attitudes. All of us, lay and non-lay religious alike, need to look with loving discernment at our manner of speaking and acting to search if they appear to suggest or, worse, if they manifest an attitude of social or class distinctions within the community.

Permit me to list some ways of speaking or acting which suggest that we have not yet become sufficiently sensitive to all the implications of that complete fraternity and equality in which we believe. Even religious who are especially conscious of the dignity and role of the vocation of a lay religious can, at times, use expressions which are discriminatory. While many can honestly say they have never been guilty of any of the following examples, I believe that most of us have heard them frequently enough.

Passionist Fathers: Perhaps the most common example suggestive of discrimination is the use of the term "Passionist Fathers" to describe the community. Many local communities employ it on their station-

ary. (I confess that some stationary at the Generalate still has this discriminatory label, but we have such a large supply that it would be quite expensive to throw it away.) Sometimes the sign at the entrance to our properties identifies the community as the Passionist Fathers. Several provinces have made conscious efforts to eliminate such a discriminatory description. Yet even in these provinces one hears a religious answer the telephone with: "Good morning, Passionist Fathers."

We Priests: Preaching in the choir to the religious community, many homilists speak of "we priests" when his words are equally applicable to the other members of the community present. Referring to or addressing a Chapter or Province Assembly some continue to speak of Capitular Fathers, sadly unaware of the presence of Passionists who are not Fathers.

We Are Seven: Frequently when I ask how many *religious* there are in a community, the answer is: "We are seven (pause) and two brothers." Such a response to an enquiry concerning the number of *religious* is eloquent testimony to an attitude which is in serious and urgent need of conversion.

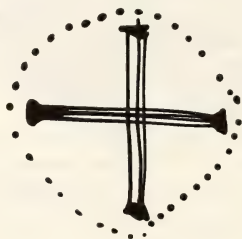
Seniority: Some lists of the religious of a province or local community still place all the priests first and then the brothers. Various internal publications or private letters will mention something about a certain number of religious: "John, Thomas, Peter and Brother Andrew." Or in recreation, a priest will address other priests of the community by their first name, but address a brother by his title: "Brother John. . . ." The cordial familiarity with one group contrasts strikingly with the cold formality by which the brother is named or addressed.

Priesthood: Occasionally one hears a priest use a manner of speaking which implies that priesthood is a superior or higher state. "Why didn't he continue on to the priesthood?" "Why didn't brother go all the way to the priesthood?" The implication seems clear that the speaker considers a brother as inferior to a priest or that his vocation 'stops short' of being a fully Passionist vocation. By what theological principle does one consider that a vocation as a brother is 'part way' to the priesthood?

Inferior: More rarely, but considerably worse is a manner of speaking which implies that a brother is an intellectual inferior. "He has enough brains, why didn't he become a priest?" Aside from the implied insult, such an attitude betrays a grossly inaccurate theological

concept of vocation. The answer to such an enquiry is that priesthood is not his vocation. God has called him to be a brother.

I earnestly hope that the beatification of Brother Isidore will be an occasion of further conversion for each of us so that we might grow in a deeply loving sensitivity to the full implications of our wonderful fraternity. With that quality of sensitivity, examples such as the above would quickly disappear.



Vocational Crisis

In many parts of the Congregation it does not appear exaggerated to speak of a grave vocational brothers' crisis. But we have no right to abandon hope or to permit pessimism to permeate our thoughts or expectations.

Indeed, in some provinces or vicariates it might be well to examine our consciences to see whether we have subconsciously absorbed social or cultural prejudices that hinder the promotion of the brother vocation. In some areas of the world the educational or social status connected with priesthood require a particularly careful discernment for clerical vocations. In welcoming and promoting brother vocations in such a culture we can be positive agents of change in the attitudes of the local church, helping all appreciate the grandeur of the gift of religious consecration.

A crisis need not be a negative phenomenon. History, including ecclesiastical history, bears abundant testimony to the growth that has blossomed out of crises. A crisis is often a providential occasion for sloughing off attitudes or practices which may have become less useful. A crisis is a stimulus to serious reflection and self-criticism. In a

crisis we search for new means of growth and vitality. A crisis can be the occasion for a return to authentic sources.

Even apart from the providential opportunities presented by a crisis, the advanced age and reduced number of brothers in large parts of the Congregation, while deeply lamented, may not be altogether without its blessings. For one thing, it has surely helped many non-brothers grow in appreciation of the important role of our brothers in maintaining community life, even though this appreciation may, at times, be more sociological or economic than theological.

A second blessing which offers welcome promise for the future is the increasing awareness that the sacred chrism of ordination has not rendered useless the hands of a priest. Regrettably, in a few communities the non-lay religious leave these domestic responsibilities almost entirely to the local Superior. More commonly, however, daily household services once performed exclusively by brothers are now frequently done by priests.

Another reason for this increased sharing in domestic responsibilities is a change in our culture. In many parts of the world today it is common for a husband to share domestic services which only a few years ago were the sole responsibility of the woman. Our appreciation of the implications of cooperation in community life have changed. In some provinces, training in cooking is a regular part of the formation program for all.

It is edifying to see a venerable old priest cleaning a corridor or washroom while a younger clerical confrere prepares the meal. Such ordinary daily services within the community not only do not interfere with other ministerial responsibilities but, on the contrary, are an enrichment of community life and of our other apostolic ministries. Our mutual service of each other is a human and spiritual enrichment. It also adds an element of experience for our relations with others.

Conclusion

The Beatification of Brother Isidore is a joy and grace for each of us. In prayerful preparation for this historic day I am confident we will each examine our way of responding to our Passionist vocation.

I sincerely hope that both individually and as communities we may use this blessed event to evaluate our attitudes and actions regarding

the nature and role of lay and clerical members of our one Passionist family. Our brothers can help all of us to a better understanding of this important aspect of our Passionist vocation. Listening to their vision of the life and ministry of a brother will help us all become more conscious of the hardships and glories of this expression of our vocation. With a shared awareness of the involvements in the different aspects of our common vocation, we can continue together to build up our Passionist future. In a particular way, may this wonderful gift of the Beatification be an incentive to pray for more brothers for our Congregation and that there may be more Blessed Isidore's among them.

With cordial best wishes and blessings for each of you, I remain,

Faternally yours in Christ,

(Most Rev.) Paul M. Boyle, C.P.
Superior General

11 July, 1984

FOOTNOTES

- 1 S. Congregatio pro Causis Sanctorum, *Positio Super Virtutibus: Brugen. Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servi Dei Isidori a Santo Ioseph (in saeculo: Isidori De Loor) Religiosi e Congregatione Passionis D.N.I.C. (1881-1916)*, Roma 1977, Vol. I, ch. iv, p. 46.
- 2 Ibid., p. 47.
- 3 Ibid., p. 54.
- 4 Van Hemelen, Constantino, C.P. *Beato Isidoro De Loor Passionista*, Roma 1984, p. 38.
- 5 Claeys, Marcellus, C.P. *The Life of Brother Isidore De Loor, C.P.*, Chicago 1976, p. 28.
- 6 Ange, P., C.P. *Lettres du Serviteur de Dieu Frere Isidore de Saint Joseph, Passioniste*, Wezwembeek-Oppem 1954, p. 37.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Ibid., p. 121.
- 9 *Positio*, op. cit., I, ch. xiv, pp. 101-102.
- 10 Ange, op. cit., p. 121.
- 11 *Positio*, op. cit., II, 1, b, p. 620.

- 12 Ange, op. cit., p. 17.
- 13 Moltman, *The Crucified God*.
- 14 S. Congregatio pro Causis Sanctorum, *Decretum die 12 mensis Iulii 1982*, Roma, pp. 5-6.
- 15 Claeys, op. cit., p. 45.
- 16 Cfr. citation for note 14.
- 17 Van Hemelen, op. cit., p. 86.
- 18 *Passionist International Bulletin*, N. 47, January 6, 1983.
- 19 Ibid., N. 36, December 10, 1981.
- 20 *Constitutions of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ*, N. 100.
- 21 Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, December 8, 1975, Number 15.
- 22 *Constitutions*, op. cit., N. 46.
- 23 Ibid., N. 100.
- 24 Pope John Paul II to Plenary Assembly of the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes, March, 1980.
- 25 Giorgini, Fabiano, C.P. *Storia dei Passionisti*, Vol. I, Edizioni Stauros, Pescara, 1981, p. 261.
- 26 *Perfectae Caritatis*, N. 15, 2.
- 27 Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Ecclesia Sanctae*, August 6, 1966, II, N. 27.
- 28 *Constitutions*, op. cit., cfr. Chapter 4.
- 29 Ibid., N. 63, 1.
- 30 *Statuta Generalia Congregationis Passionis Iesu Christi*, Romae, 1982, N. 36.
- 31 *Codex Iuris Canonici*, Vatican City, 1983, cfr. cn. 766.
- 32 Giorgini, op. cit., pp. 256-266.
- 33 *I Processi di Beatificazione e Canonizzazione di S. Paolo della Croce*, Vol. IV, pp. 232-233. Cfr. also Giorgini, op. cit., p. 257.
- 34 *Codex Iuris Canonici*, op. cit., cn. 588, 2. The decree of November 27, 1969 is abrogated by the new Code of Canon Law in virtue of canon 6. The requirement of canon 588, 2 seems to be met if the Major Superiors are clerics.

Venerable Isidore De Loor

On April 6 a similar plenary session of Cardinals recommended to the Holy Father that Brother Isidore De Loor

(PIB 37, Jan. 1982) be declared Venerable. The official declaration will probably be made in the next month or so.

On April 29 we received the joyful news that the commission of six medical experts, after having examined an alleged miracle attributed to Venerable Isidore, were unanimous in their opinion that there was no other possible explanation for the cure. Documentation on several other alleged miracles was also available, but this particular cure of leukemia was so impressive that our Postulator General presented only this one case. We expect that in the next few months the Plenaria of Cardinals will recommend to the Holy Father that this Passionist Brother be Beatified. We hope that the ceremony might take place toward the end of March next year.

from the "Passionist International Bulletin"

Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints Decree

For the beatification and canonization of the venerable Servant of God, Isidore of St. Joseph, known in secular life as Isidore De Loor, Brother of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ.

The Venerable Servant of God, Isidore of St. Joseph (in secular life known as Isidore De Loor), a Brother of the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, was born on April 18, 1881 in the municipality commonly called Vrasene, in the diocese of Ghent. His family were farmers. After he finished his schooling he did farm work; and all this was integrated into a life of genuine piety and a fruitful apostolate in his parish especially by teaching Christian doctrine. He left home in 1907 and entered the Passionist Novitiate as a Brother and was known as Brother Isidore of St. Joseph.

He made his religious Profession on September 13, 1908. His Superiors sent him to various houses of the Belgium Province where he performed the various duties assigned him, especially as cook, gardener and porter. He was always a very fervant religious, especially by sharing the Passion of Christ, by assiduous meditation on this Mystery, working for all the monasteries of his Congregation and offering everything to God for the conversion of souls.

What is more, the special marks of this religious were humility and obedience, and he would be called "Brother of the Will of God."

Isidore was struck by cancer, first in the eyes and then in the whole body. After some months of illness, during which period he showed a

marvelous patience and calmness of spirit, he died on October 6, 1916 at Kortrijk in the diocese of Bruges.

After his death the fame of his holiness grew day by day and the faithful came on continual pilgrimage from all parts of Belgium to venerate at his tomb which was in the Passionist Church of St. Anthony at Kortrijk.

After many testimonies were gathered pertaining to his virtues in the Ordinary and Apostolic Processes—and the usual procedures verified, Pope John Paul II solemnly announced on July 12, 1982, that the Servant of God, Isidore of St. Joseph, had practiced all the theological and cardinal virtues to an heroic degree.

Many of the faithful who cultivated piety toward the Venerable Servant of God clearly perceived how true that teaching of Vatican Council II is which states: "Once received into their heavenly home and being present to the Lord (cfr. 2 Cor. 5, 8), through Him and with Him and in Him they do not cease to intercede with the Father for us. . . . So by their brotherly concern is our weakness greatly helped" (Lumen Gentium, 49).

Many reports of the graces and cures attributed to the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God were sent to the Postulator of the Cause as the years went on, and many of these were included in the Acts of the Apostolic Processes. From among these, the Postulator chose—for obtaining beatification, the healing of Irene Ottevaere, wife of Mr. De Zaetyd in the city of Melden, Belgium.

Irene Ottevaere, born in 1917, was a mother of five children. She always had good health and worked very hard for her large, farming family. On April 4, 1953—it was Holy Saturday—she was struck by an unexpected illness. The family doctor visited her on Easter Sunday. On Easter Monday she grew worse, vomiting bile and becoming jaundiced. On Easter Wednesday, April 8, she was sent to the hospital in the city of Audendarde, where she received the Sacrament of the Anointing of the sick, and from that time on was considered to be in danger of death. She was comatose for several days and the cause of the disease was found to be a severe atrophy of the liver or serious hepatitis. The prognosis offered by the hospital personnel was not encouraging; it was almost certain death. Appropriate care was given to the sick woman, but it was not enough, and it appeared that she was dying.

Then fervant prayers were offered to God for her, through the intercession of the Venerable Servant of God, Brother Isidore of St. Joseph, by members of her family and by many Religious, especially the Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul living in the city of Anzengem where Irene's aunt lived. A picture with the relic was placed under the head of the sick woman.

On Saturday, April 11, in the evening, the sick woman began to improve a little. On the following day, she began to improve even more when she began to recognize persons. On Monday, April 13, her spirit quickened to the marvel of those who thought that death was imminent; for they had already said the prayers for the dying and her burial clothes were already prepared.

Gradually and rather quickly the change continued until she regained her health, the jaundiced condition disappeared, her appetite returned and she regained her strength.

Witnesses and doctors unanimously affirmed that the cure was humanly inexplicable.

When the Apostolic Process on the virtues of the Venerable Servant of God was held in the Episcopal Curia at Bruges, the arguments about the cure of Irene Ottevaere were discussed from May 22 until December 14, 1962, ten years after the cure had taken place.

The validity of this Process was affirmed by the Holy See on May 26, 1969.

On April 29, 1983, the Council of Doctors of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints met to discuss this cure and they all unanimously thought that it was rapid, perfect and stable and inexplicable from the powers of nature.

A special meeting of Theological Consultants discussed this cure on October 25 of the same year and afterwards on January 10, 1984, the Ordinary Congregation of Cardinals met—with Cardinal Mario Ciappi giving the Report. Both meetings gave a favorable reply about the preternatural character of the healing and Pope John Paul II, after receiving the wishes of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints, directed that the Decree be made.

When this was done according to proper form, at a meeting of the Cardinals, the Prefect indicated below, and Mario Ciappi, Reporter for the Cause, and myself the Bishop a Secretis, the Holy Father declared: "It is certain that God accomplished a miracle through the in-

tercession of the Venerable Isidore of St. Joseph, namely the rapid perfect and stable cure of Mrs. Irene Ottevaere De Zaeytyd of lethal hepatitis."

He directed that this Decree be published and put in the Acts of the Sacred Congregation of the Causes of Saints.

Given at Rome, January 12, the Holy Year of Redemption, 1984.

Peter Cardinal Palazzini, Prefect
†Traianus Crisan, Titular Archbishop
Drivastensis, A Secretis

Translated by Silvan Rouse, C.P.
House of Greater Solitude
Bedford, PA—USA

Brothers in Clerical Institutes

In the past two or more decades clerical religious institutes have experienced a crisis regarding the role of their lay brothers. According to the Vatican Council, clerics and brothers were to be fully integrated into the life of the community with the only difference being that flowing from sacred orders. Both clerics and brothers have experienced difficulties in accomplishing this integration. A decree from the S. Congregation for Religious prohibited lay religious serving as superiors in clerical institutes. In many Congregations the brothers began exercising a direct pastoral ministry outside of the religious house. In some places the term "clerical institute" is resented as a designation which ignores lay members. Some religious have strong reactions against the adjective "lay," affirming that a religious is distinct from a lay person in the actual juridic structure of the church. Vocations to this style of life have generally been severely reduced in the last twenty or thirty years. *from the "Passionist International Bulletin"*

On Eagle's Wings

Recently a set of postage stamps was issued in recognition of the great contribution missionary aviation made to Papua, New Guinea. The Government also erected a monument to honor missionary pilots who gave their lives on the job.

I'm proud to have been a part of that great work, without getting my name on that monument, in spite of being so close so often.

You could easily identify pilots by their sweat-soaked shirts when the weather was bad. Returning from a hard day's flying, clouds and heavy rain often forced us to divert to the nearest airstrip. Our struggle to get through left us low on gas with darkness approaching. The urge to get home to a meal and bed would sometimes override better judgment and coax us to take off before weather really cleared. Then we would be forcefully reminded of how much better it is to be on the ground wishing you were in the air, than to be in the air, wishing you were on the ground.

Brother Ben Send, SVD, an amiable Australian in his prime, served many years as pilot and mechanic. When a fellow missionary who was his chief pilot flew into a mountain and was killed after 18,000 hours of flying experience, Ben decided to quit flying and work only as a mechanic. I was privileged to know his great talent and sparkling personality. By tragic irony, he was a passenger on a small commercial plane when it crashed into a mountain killing all on board.

Finding tiny airstrips in remote mountains or featureless swamp-land was a problem, even if you had often been there; finding one you didn't know, with low clouds and poor visibility, was a matter of luck

or divine intervention. We had to be in constant radio contact with flight control while other pilots listened in, so we invented professional sounding calls to avoid embarrassment of admitting we were lost. "Holding in the area" usually meant "I can't find the # \$ % & airstrip" — not funny when low on gas.

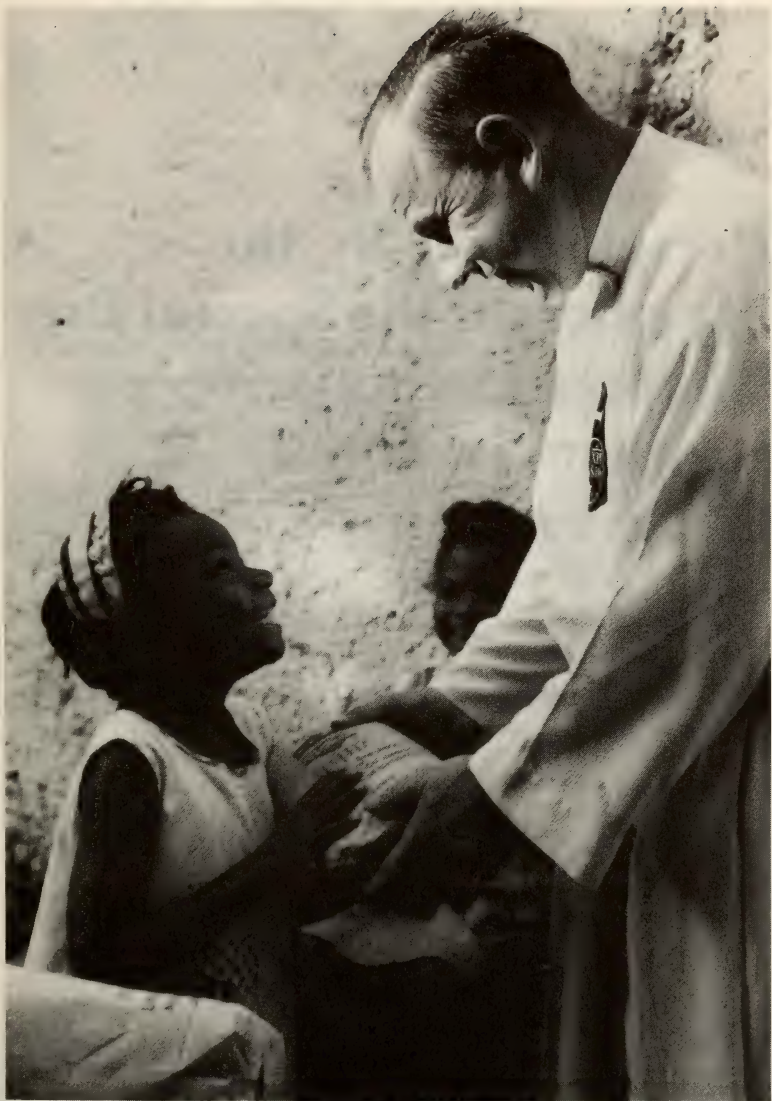
One veteran missionary, a holy little man of 72, was pensive as I flew him away from his remote and desolate mission for the last time. He studied woven arm bands given him by his people as a farewell token. This seemed pitifully small exchange for his 30 years of heroic self-giving to a primitive tribe hardened by the daily struggle to survive; but I knew he cherished them. They were a type that only great men in the clan were allowed to wear, eloquent testimony of esteem.

Like frightened children, a native couple clung to each other in wildeyed terror as the plane lifted them above the only environment they ever knew. The man had captured crocodiles and speared wild boar; the woman had endured untold hardships. Harsh jungle life had etched their wiry bodies with many wrinkles, and now the woman's legs were half eaten through by a tropical ulcer.

As I flew them to the poor hospital in Wewak, I knew their first sight of the sea, cars, and buildings would cause more culture shock. Mercifully, the leg wasn't amputated; and a month later I returned them to their village, the joyful bearers of wondrous tales.

I've always cherished my vocation as a Passionist Brother, even when the work was limited to chores in a monastery. It seems the good Lord made some concessions to my taste for adventure without letting me forget that the greatest adventure is discovering Him at work in all human activity.

Brother Michael Stomber, C.P. was a flight instructor before he joined the Passionists in 1950 at the age of 22. He served as maintenance man, cook and tailor here in the U.S. and in Jamaica, West Indies. For a while he flew a mission plane in Guyana, South America. After spending some time at the Passionist House of Prayer in Bedford, PA, he returned to flying for the missions in New Guinea. He is now in West Hartford, CT, as a member of the Passionist Community there.



*Brother Michael Stomber, C.P. while a Missionary in Jamaica WEST INDIES
FEEDING THE POOR*

DAMIAN CARROLL, C.P.
SALVADOR LEON, C.P.
SERGIO TEANI, C.P.

Presentation by the Members of the Special Pre- Chapter Commission on Brothers in Our Congregation

“ . . . to announce the Gospel of the Passion by our lives and works.” CD

Introduction

In any study or reflection on the life and ministry of the Passionist Brother in our Congregation at this time in our history, it would be relevant for us to remember that it was as a layman that our Founder, St. Paul of the Cross, received from God the inspiration to found our Congregation. It was as a layman that he was clothed in the Habit of the Passion, wrote the Primitive Rule in his lonely cell at Castellazzo, took his vow to promote devotion to the Passion of our Lord and obtained papal approval to gather companions. The priesthood seems to have been the idea of Monsignor Cavalieri and it was brought about by Divine Providence without any initiative on the part of Paul himself. (1)

As a "lay hermit," he was assigned by his bishop to various churches at Castellazzo, later at Gaeta, Itri, etc. But Paul was not satisfied to devote his time and energies to solitude alone. It seemed to him that the Lord was also calling him to devote himself to works of charity for others as well. He had taken a vow to promote devotion to the Passion of Jesus. Even during the period of his life as a "lay-hermit" he promoted this devotion. During this period he taught catechism, gave spiritual direction, conducted spiritual conferences for nuns, and even preached extensively.

The history of the Religious Life indicates that this form of the Christian life was a "lay-movement" in the Church. The more obvious examples of this today, aside from the early monks of the desert, would be the example of St. Benedict, the founder of western monasticism and St. Francis, along with our own Founder who established our Congregation while still a layman.

As Brothers we like to believe that St. Paul of the Cross intended a total integration of all the religious into the life and apostolic activity of the Community. For this reason, the recruitment and formation of all our religious should reflect this total integration.

In our own times the Vatican Council has called all of us to renewal. The Council explicitly states that all religious communities are to remove those barriers that fracture fraternity among them. The changing conditions of our times make this imperative. In our world today most of the walls of class distinction have crumbled. Moreover, universal education is so widespread, that most men and women in countries we serve have a good education, or at least the opportunity for it. In the Church and in our Congregation the value of the lay state is emerging as never before, and our Congregation must respond by encouraging the Gospel value this reflects.



New Opportunities

All of these elements in the life of our Founder as well as the various directives from Church and Congregational Documents encourage us as we continue to open up new and challenging opportunities for the Passionist Brother Religious. Our present Chapter Document (Constitutions) and other directives in the Provinces throughout the Congregation indicate the necessity of a proper theological, scriptural and liturgical formation of the Brother so as to form him spiritually as he prepares to take a more active part in the liturgy as a Christian and as a Religious. This formation also prepares him to take a new and active role in the direct apostolate of our Congregation. For the fulfillment of his work the Brother must be prepared adequately. His activity must be widened.

Responses

From the responses to an initial questionnaire as well as to the first draft of this study four areas of concern seemed to surface consistently:

1. Vocation animation (Image and Identity)
2. Formation
3. Ministry
4. Community (C.P. Spirituality)

Vocation Animation

The understanding and the promotion of the vocation of the Passionist Brother must be the responsibility of *all* our religious, both Cleric and Brother. If we are to survive as a Community we must attract and accept new members. In attracting new members to our Congregation we must make specific efforts to explain and encourage all options to this form of life. We believe that the presence of the Brother in our Passionist Religious family is an integral part of the whole. We also believe that this responsibility for attracting and accepting new members as Brother must be the special concern of the Brother himself. And this concern must find expression in creative approaches to the issue.

We have a limited view of the vocation of the Brother Religious if we view it simply in relation to priesthood. It must be viewed from the value and understanding of the Religious Life itself. Therefore, any description or plan for the life and activity of the Passionist

Brother must be in relation to the Religious Life. His value to the Church, the Congregation and to himself is from the viewpoint of *what he is* rather than from *what he does*.

As a vowed disciple, the Passionist Brother has been called to espouse a particular form of the Christian Life rooted in the Gospel. It is a form of life which blocks out other choices and allows elements of freedom to emerge more clearly. The Passionist Brother must share the riches of this vowed life with others and what better way to do this than by encouraging others to follow the Lord as he does.

We are presently experiencing a *crisis situation* with our vocation efforts, not only to the life of the Passionist Brothers, but to all forms of Passionist Life. It seems that this *crisis* demands some radical and creative steps as an attempt at a solution, if indeed we are to survive as a Community . . . and we encourage such radical and creative responses from all members of our Congregation.

Hand in hand with our concern for the encouragement of vocations to the life of the Passionist Brother goes our concern for a clarification of the Image and Identity of this form of the Passionist Life. We therefore recommend and encourage efforts for this clarification in all Provinces and cultures where our Congregation is established. We are especially concerned that as we establish the Congregation in new mission areas the presence of the Passionist Brother be always assured.

It seems that in some Provinces and Vicariates in our Congregation no efforts are made to encourage young men to become Passionist Brothers. If this is indeed a fact, we challenge such areas as to why this is so and ask that the situation be given attention.

The creative animation of the vocation of the Passionist Brother by way of mass media of the electronic, spoken and printed word is to be constantly encouraged by all members of the Congregation whenever and wherever the Passionist vocation is promoted. Both forms of our Passionist life are to be explained and encouraged.

Formation

Without proper formation, no religious can lead a happy, productive and fulfilling life. Our Chapter Documents (Constitutions) as well as Provincial legislation have included the necessity of proper formation for ALL religious on all levels of our life and work, includ-

ing such aspects as on-going education and the preparations for 'second careers.' Unless these forms of formation are encouraged on the local and provincial level all that will be done is to repeat the solemn but useless affirmation of principles without achieving anything.

Proper preparation for all stages of the religious life including apostolic activity is essential. Once the Brother has completed his initial formation and has been established in some activity of the Congregation, he must be continually encouraged to take advantage of opportunities for his personal growth and development by participating in the various programs offered both within and outside our community. None of us can assume the responsibilities of the religious life without proper formation, both initial and on-going. Brothers have been encouraged by the efforts of the Congregation in this direction.

It must be the responsibility of the Community to encourage the Brother to develop his personal qualities and gifts to the utmost in order to perform the greatest personal service for the Church, for the Congregation and for himself as an effective apostle.

The spiritual and professional formation of the Passionist Brother must be kept abreast of the times in which we live. For this reason the 'on-going' formation of the Brother takes on additional meaning. Our concern is to prepare for the future . . . not perpetuate the past. It might be said that the programs of formation are the key to correcting the present crisis we now find ourselves in as far as the Brother in our Congregation is concerned.



Apostolate

Our Constitutions reminds all that "All religious take part in the apostolate, each according to his aptitude, resources and functions." (C 3) When the Passionist Brother takes to his mind and heart the directives and inspirations of our Constitutions, he absorbs it as applying to himself totally. In his desire to live out his dedication and to become totally involved in the life and work and activity of our Congregation, his interest and zeal in all the activity of our Community is especially inspired and encouraged by such parts of our Constitutions as No. 58 (CD 59) which reads as follows:

Since by its very nature the religious life is apostolic, we participate in the apostolate in the manner best suited to our talents and situations. We hold the ministry of the word in highest esteem. What we have to live and preach in all fidelity is the "*good news of salvation*" (Eph 1:3). This word of truth, which is Christ, is the Word of Life (Jn 1:14). This Word, as committed to the Church, creates community among all believers and brings them together in the celebration of the sacraments. Following the example of Christ, who was caught up in the lives and history of his contemporaries and who went about doing good and healing all (Acts 10:38), we will be doers of the Word (Jas 1:22), by the evangelical witness and prophetic value of preaching as involvement in the needs of the people.

We appreciate and respect the "traditional role" of internal service to the needs of the Community. However we feel that our service to the needs of the Church, Community and ourselves should never be limited. In creating us God has given each of us our own talents and abilities to be used for the spread of the Kingdom and for our own salvation.

The "declericalization" of the Church is having its effect. Many men religious (Brothers) are experiencing a broader ecclesial sense of ministry. Along with this we see a new emphasis on the full integration of women religious and lay-persons as co-partners and full collaborators in this common mission. The value of the religious life as such, as a witness and a radical commitment, apart from any clerical position and apart from any structured role, is still not easily perceived. Here again, our own image and identity of ourselves must be clarified by us by a proper understanding of who we are and what the ministry of religious life is all about.

The apostolic activity of the Passionist Brother is directly related to his image and identity. We are intensified Christians who respond in a special way to the Gospel of the Lord.

Our Constitutions remind us in No. 70 (CD 80) that we are to make a mature appraisal of our apostolic activity in order to adapt to the circumstances of time and place. The Constitutions earlier state that we are to pledge to "place ourselves, our talents, our work, our achievements at the service of the community and its mission" (C 11).

In his circular letter entitled *Passionist Apostolic Community* dated March 25, 1979, Father General cautions us that "We must avoid that small mindedness or instinctive appeal to tradition which would keep us timid and passive, inhibited in our creativity. Prophetic boldness must be blended with the prudence of the Spirit." Father General continues, "Courageously following the Spirit we can avoid those extremes of fear of criticism or counter productive imprudence without restricting the impulses of a sound prophetic sense which can inspire us in solidarity to take calculated risks. Apostolic initiatives, particularly creative ones, must be carefully planned. Such "new," ingenious and courageous ecclesial experiments should be in response to needs recognized by the Province as among its priorities."

Pope Paul VI highlighted the apostolic role of religious when he wrote that "Religious, for their part find in their consecrated life a privileged means of effective evangelization. At the deepest level of their being they are caught up in the dynamism of the Church's life which is thirsty for the Divine Absolute and called to holiness. It is to this holiness that they bear witness. They embody the Church in her desire to give herself completely to the radical demands of the Beatitudes. By their lives they are a sign of total availability to God, the Church and the brethren" (Evangelii Nuntiandi #69). Our Constitutions state the same objective by declaring that "our communities aspire to be a leaven of salvation in the Church and in the world" (C 6 CD 6).

Community

It seems that there is no better description of our life together as Passionist Clerics and Brothers than that given in *Perfectae Caritatis* No. 15 which reads as follows:

Common life, in prayer and the sharing of the same spirit (Acts 2:42), should be constant, after the example of the early Church, in which the company of believers were of one mind and soul. It should be nourished by the teaching of the Gospel and by the sacred liturgy, especially by the Eucharist. Religious as members of Christ, should live together as brothers and should give pride of place to one another in esteem (Rom 12:10) carrying one another's burdens (Gal 6:12). A community gathered together as a true family in the Lord's name enjoys his presence (Mt 18:20) through the love of God which is poured out into their hearts by the Holy Spirit (Rom 5:5). For love sums up the law (Rom 13:10); by it we know that we have crossed over from death to life (1 Jn 3:14). Indeed, the unity of the brethren is the symbol of the coming of Christ (Jn 13:35; 17:21) and is a source of great apostolic power.

The chapter continues with some examples of how this fraternal bond between members of the religious community can be strengthened. In so doing we believe that the soul of the Christian and Religious Life is a return to the Gospel . . . that is, a return to Jesus Christ.

In the wake of Vatican II, the notion of the Church which has evolved with ever increasing clarity is that of a community of persons incorporated into Christ to worship the Father in the Spirit of Love.

The Community aspect of the Church today, with its accent on the importance of the persons who make up that community, stands in contrast to former notions of the Church which seemed to highlight more its structural and hierarchical aspect. It is evident that this newer, and yet much older, concept of the Church affects our understanding of our Passionist Religious Life. By looking upon the Church as a Community of persons, we come to understand better the nature and purpose of our Religious Life in the Church. If our Religious Life is meant to be an intensification of the vocation of every Christian, then it must convey more clearly the notion of a community of persons incorporated into Christ to worship the Father in the Spirit of Love.

From the Vatican Council's Documents on the *Church* and on the *religious life*, we are given a more precise understanding of the nature of our Religious Life. Not only are we important for the life of the Church because of the work we do, but more so for *WHAT WE ARE*.

Many of us continue to talk about the various crises in our Religious Life, such as a crisis in obedience, chastity, identity, etc. How-

ever, if we carefully examine all these various crises in relation to our fraternal life together it seems to be most evident in the general area of our life together in community. After all, the essence of the Gospel is not poverty, chastity or obedience . . . but charity.

We must be a sign of this charity, this love, by the example of our fraternal life together, in community and in this way we are a continual reflection of the early Jerusalem community. In the mind of St. Paul of the Cross an essential element of his Congregation was *community*. Paul's concept of community was not simply to keep the "Observance" going, but he did insist that *all* have experiences of prolonged periods of life together in community, hence the value of *prayer, penance and solitude*. Once any of us moves away from these values our life together as a praying fraternal community is threatened and eventually will be destroyed.

Number 23 of our Constitutions (CD 23) describes our Passionist vocation as a call to the fullness of Christian love in an evangelical community of life. All of us must ask ourselves what meaning this has for us as we live our lives together . . . Clerics and Brothers. We believe that living together in fraternal community goes beyond mere presence, for it touches deeply our lived experience of sharing our Passionist Life together in ways that are closer than formerly. Hopefully the things that allowed for distinctions among us are gone as we attempt to reflect on this love and concern as we follow the urging of our Holy Rule: "to seek answers to the problems of fraternal living" (CD 30, C 29).

In our reflection on *passionist community life* we are especially concerned about the wording of number 89 (98 C; 140 CD) of the proposed Constitutions. This proposed title of our Congregation ignores the presence of the Brother in our Congregation. We feel that in any description of our Congregation, the presence of the Brother must be acknowledged. Therefore we propose the following text as a replacement:

"The title of the Congregation is "The Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, expressed in the initial C.P. It is a Religious Institute of Clerics and Brothers of Pontifical right and enjoys the privilege of exemption."

We feel that when a significant number of our members are Brothers we must describe our Congregation in this manner; otherwise much of the remaining text of our Constitution has no meaning.



Conclusion

In a Circular Letter dated October 19, 1981, the Feast of St. Paul of the Cross, Father General gave a report on the progress of the Cause of Brother Isidore de Loor, C.P. Father General wrote: "I am convinced that the paucity of vocations to the Passionist Brothers is weakening the spiritual quality of our community life."

Recent developments in the Church and in Religious Life have helped us take a closer look at ourselves and at our call from the Father to follow a Crucified and Resurrected Christ, as well as at our own image of ourselves as we prepare for the future.

The Passionist Brother must not be bound by old models. He must help create new ones as the needs and demands of the Church and our Passionist Community encourage. His heart must not be cluttered. He must be discovering himself and his community to see what kind of faith he is reflecting under the many touches of God's grace. This must be understandable by him, that his living in a changing atmosphere with new philosophies and new values, the Religious Life of the Passionist Brother must be constantly challenged. To meet this challenge today, he must be a man who sees himself as a happy, fruitful and self-critical man. The Religious Life of the Passionist Brother to be truly meaningful in these closing days of the 20th century and beyond, must be a creative response of the whole person, one who is

completely taken up with the love of God, one whose heart and life the "message of the Cross has penetrated" (CD 9).

The Passionist Brother's creative approach must reflect enthusiasm for what he is and what he is doing. The continuing spirit of renewal admits that there is always room for change. If the Passionist Brother becomes primarily content in preserving old forms, images and privileges, or keeping his own preferential status or enjoying the comforts of an uninvolved existence, he is betraying the significance of his vocation today. And the young who we want to attract and accept into the Community as members are quick to discern the comparative emptiness of such a life.

Renewal coming from an increased self-awareness should enable us to find greater light, newer energy and fuller joy in the fulfillment of what motivated us in the beginning.

In the past, maybe the Brother never fully understood his vocation. We do not think that this understanding is totally necessary. We think that we can say much the same about any vocation or state in life. They all have their own mystery; maybe this is why much of it is so very exciting.

As brothers we need to reflect on ourselves. We need to feel the throb of our life. We must learn to know ourselves better if we wish to live our proper vocation and to offer to the world the message of *brotherhood and salvation*. If we are not seen and understood for what we are, how can our own image of ourselves be a good one. The Brother can be seen and understood only if he is intelligible, but we must be intelligible to ourselves first.

Having said all this and reflected on what must be done in the years ahead as a means of strengthening our determination to give the life and ministry of the Passionist Brother the strength it needs we would offer these suggestions as elements to be considered under the four headings of this Study Paper.

VOCATION ANIMATION

- a. Because of the present *crisis situation* in the lack of Brother vocations throughout our Congregation, we urge renewed and specific efforts and programs for vocation animation to this form of Passionist Life.
- b. It is the responsibility of *all* in the Congregation to be in a

position to encourage all who seek a gospel way of life and who are attracted by the charism of St. Paul of the Cross and our own example as his followers. We must be prepared to be able to propose to them concrete ways of living this life.

- c. It is worthwhile to underline the responsibility of *all members* to cultivate, welcome and support new vocations by the authenticity of our own Passionist lives, by our witness, our prayer and our service.
- d. In any vocation activity the gospel life of St. Paul of the Cross, its value and its concrete realization, should always be presented as an essential aim of our vocation.
- e. In any public description of our Passionist Community the descriptive phrase, "*Passionist Fathers and Brothers*" be used as a better reflection of who we are. This could be a communication method used on all community stationary and public signs in and around our buildings where such notices are used.
- f. Whenever possible, assign a Brother as a vocation director for a Province and Region.
- g. Encourage the use of modern means of social communications to make this vocation better known and understood.

FORMATION (Initial and on-going)

- a. Solid formation is the basis for a new beginning and therefore an urgent priority as we prepare to present the vocation of the Passionist Brother in a way that is more related to the present day. Our current legislation provides all that is necessary, the task now seems to be one of implementation.
- b. In order for the Brother to live his Passionist Life more fully and to evolve new forms of ministry which are lively and timely, Provinces and regions must adopt suitable means to know and understand and judge the real needs of the individual Brother. Often times this calls for a change in attitudes and an openness to new models.
- c. We urge that some Brothers be trained as members of the formation teams in each area.
- d. Because of our past practices the value of the continuing for-

mation programs of our Congregation are of greater need for those Brothers who never had such opportunities. The support and encouragement of the local community is necessary to help those Brothers in their willingness and capacity for a continuance of their formation.

- e. To accomplish the goals of formation in a way which would correspond to the needs of the different situations in the respective areas of our Congregation the Provinces and Regions are encouraged to establish a specific plan for the formation of the Brother.
- f. During both initial and on-going formation the inclusion of special courses in the theology of the Religious Life with special stress on Passionist Spirituality is especially urged.

APOSTOLATE

- a. Our revised Constitutions are telling us many things about involvement in ministry. Our understanding and acceptance of these directives have many implications for the Brother. It would mean that, except for those sacramental ministries which are proper to the ordained members of the Congregation, all other roles and functions and ministries are properly and rightfully open to all members. However, the differences would not depend on whether one is a Priest or Brother, but simply upon ability, preparation, and the needs of the Church and the Congregation. The necessary "hierarchy" within the Congregation as a whole, and at the level of the local community, would not be a fixed "hierarchy" of inequality of membership, based on ordination, but a fluid hierarchy in terms of the gifts of the members and the needs for the ministries that are called for and compatible with our Passionist charism.
- b. We urge the integration of Brothers into all our apostolates. This must be done with a plan and not simply as a token response to our Constitutions.
- c. We must continue to encourage the process of adaptation and expansion, especially in the areas of the apostolate. All indications are that we have reached a moment in history where the life and activity of the Brother is drawing all of us

to a better understanding of what the ministry of Religious life is all about.

- d. Wherever our Congregation is established, efforts should be made to insure the presence of the Brother.

COMMUNITY

As we reflect on our lives together it seems that the solution to our many concerns comes back to the vitality of the local community. It is here that the Brother gets his encouragement and finds support in his religious life. It is here where we find our common mission as Clerics and Brothers. The aim of our life together in community is the development of sanctity through prayer, penance and solitude apart from the secular world so that we can be refreshed and nourished so as to be better prepared to bring the *good news of salvation* to those we minister to.

The members of the Brothers' Preparatory Commission for the General Chapter wishes to conclude this presentation with a special word of thanks and appreciation to Father General for his consistent interest in the Brothers of our Congregation. We are grateful to him for establishing this Chapter Commission and we trust that this study report will be of help as we move into the future.

We are especially grateful to those in the Congregation who took the time and interest to respond to the First Draft of this Study. Many individuals and groups submitted excellent observations and suggestions which were of great help in this process.

Words of affirmation came from such varied groups as Provincial Chapters, Assistancies (Italian), Province Senates (Holy Cross and St. Paul of the Cross), groups of Brothers (Ireland, New Guinea, Italy, U.S.A.) and many local communities. We ask for continued prayer support as we move into the General Chapter and beyond.

Peace and fraternity

Brothers' Commission

Brother Damian Carroll, C.P.
Chairman

Brother Salvador Leon, C.P.
Brother Sergio Teani, C.P.

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CARA REPORT
Brothers of Taize (Afire with Love)
Schillebeeckx—Ministry
U.S. Brothers WASHINGTON STATEMENT
ORIGINS

Footnote

- 1 From letter of November 21, 1967 of Theodore Foley to Brothers of St. Paul of Cross Province (Province Archives).

Washington Statement on A Call To Brotherhood

Jesus walked this earth as brother. In doing so, He appropriated our humanness. In a world, sinful and broken, He identified Himself with a people oppressed and suffering, and He ministered to them. All Christians are called to share in this brotherhood of Jesus; in them, Jesus continues to walk this earth.

In reponse to this mysterious call, of which we stand in awe, we have assumed the title Brother. We come together in community as brothers to live out this call. Although we each come with our particular history and community charism, which distinguish those who call themselves Brother, nevertheless, we hold much in common.



TO BROTHER is to participate deeply in the sacramental life of the Church. Such participation is a reminder to Brothers of the basic mystery that we are the sacrament of Jesus the brother.

TO BROTHER is to minister. Rooted in the gospel, we perform a variety of ministries within the Church. As men in touch with our times, we possess the freedom to continue the saving works of Jesus. We brother Jesus to the world.

TO BROTHER is to understand and appreciate the working of the Spirit in the world and in the lives of men and women. We walk with them as together we effectively discern creative means of furthering God's Kingdom. Such ministry demands preparation through prayer, study, and Christian living.

TO BROTHER is to encourage, enable, and support our brothers and sisters in offering, through commitment and action, their own particular gifts and charisms in ministry to others. All Christians have gifts, which must be called forth for the Christian community. We associate ourselves with Jesus, the enabler, so that being a Brother is not a role we assume, but rather a posture we hold in all our activities with the friends of Jesus.

TO BROTHER is to minister to persons as one like them. We do not stand apart from our brothers and sisters; we stand with them. We make this real when we resist the temptation to separate ourselves from God's people; rather we associate ourselves sociologically, psychologically, and religiously with them.

TO BROTHER is to comfort with all people the pain and loneliness of existence. There is ultimately no division between the Brother in ministry and those who stand in need of ministry.

TO BROTHER is to embrace and empower the marginalized and the powerless, and struggle with them in the achievement of freedom.

TO BROTHER is to reconcile, unify, and heal every kind of discord. We are compassionately sensitive to the injustices that fragment the human family and the global environment. We call upon God, upon our own competencies, and upon our brothers and sisters to heal divisions that impede God's Kingdom on earth.

TO BROTHER is to bring to our ministries the catalyst of our relationships with Jesus who entered our humanity as brother, who walked in the turmoil of His time, who struggled to understand His identity, and who shared His story in action and word.

TO BROTHER is passionately to proclaim, in word and deed, the prophetic utterance of a God who continuously calls us to hope. Yet we know that our hearts will ever see more than our hands will ever make.

TO BROTHER is to be profoundly aware of the reality that structures, whether personal, ecclesiastical, or political, are created to sustain and enable vision and must be critiqued and challenged when we lose sight of the vision, and when we focus on the maintenance of the structures.

TO BROTHER is to recognize our need for and reliance upon a community for support, sustenance, and love. We allow tenderness to be our strength, and vulnerability to be our power so that our compassion may spark alive the more-to-come in our brothers and sisters.

TO BROTHER is to choose to live with impermanence in relationships, in possessions, in power, to have the time and energy and gift to be for one another.

TO BROTHER is to invest in integrity, intimacy, and friendship, yet to let go of one all-encompassing human relationship. We center our lives on the tangible belief of God's love for us, and our brothering that love to others.

TO BROTHER is to let go of possessions, role expectations, and even reputation in our freedom to care for the earth and its people. Our arms are not cluttered with goods and excesses. Our arms are not raised in a defensive posture or to build a shell around ourselves. Rather, our arms are free to embrace and make whole, bodies that are broken, communities that are fragmented. We freely give away what we have received as gifts.

TO BROTHER is to listen to the Spirit and the cry of the earth, listen to the men and women with whom we stand, listen to Jesus as the One who comes, as the One who calls us to let go, to follow. Sometimes it means staying put, but radically changing the dynamic or style of ministry. Other times, it necessitates moving into a new ministry or bringing the same ministry to new people. We are empowered to enter the suffering need of the earth, respond with suffering love, and know the humility of friendship.

Finally, in our being sacrament of Jesus the brother, we deepen our involvement in prayer. Only through Christ in us and our brothers and sisters with us, do we celebrate our freedom and joy and friendship in sacrament and prayer. We are in a present in which we have the freedom to be still with the Lord who calls us by name, who is faithful to us. We are in a present in which we celebrate that He still walks among us, in which we join with Him in proclaiming the Good

News. We are in a present in which we offer our lives in some small way to renew the face of the earth.

We recognize that there are many practical consequences to what we have said. In the last quarter of the twentieth century, we are convinced that certain consequences demand our attentions and energies so that we may be credible and faithful signs of what it is to be a Brother.

We call ourselves to

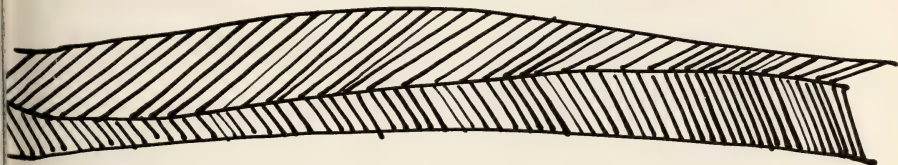
- **SPEAK OUT** consistently against all injustice and oppression, especially racism and sexism, wherever they are found;
- **COOPERATE** in building a Church and society that are marked by equality and respect for all men and women;
- **ESCHEW** all privilege and elitism;
- **ADOPT** personal and communal life-styles that are simple and modest, in an effort to be a countersign to consumerism;
- **ENABLE** all women and men to express their ministries in the fullest way, and specifically to stand with our sisters in their struggle for full participation in ministry.

This statement was written from sharing the lived experiences of 12 different Brothers from 12 different religious communities. It is their vision of how they see the American Brother in the Church.

Holy Trinity Mission Seminary
Washington, DC
December 6, 1979

A Call To Brotherhood

Detroit Response to the Washington Statement



As Brothers of the American Church in the '80s, at the Ninth Annual National Assembly of Religious Brothers meeting in Detroit, Michigan, June 22, 1980, in a spirit of confidence, hope, and peacefulness,

WE AFFIRM our need for a personal relationship with God rooted in the gospels, which will enable us to minister to and with the People of God in a more Christ-centered way.

WE CHALLENGE ourselves and all Brothers to a more intense life of prayer, reflection, and continued self-growth.

WE AFFIRM the unique gifts that Brothers have brought and continue to bring to their ministries.

WE CHALLENGE ourselves and all Brothers to search out and be open to new and creative ways of ministering, especially to the poor, oppressed, and alienated, as ministry and presence rather than as a job to be done.

WE AFFIRM the need for a simple life-style based on the gospel, both for ourselves and our communities.

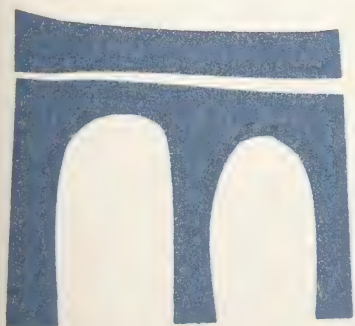
WE CHALLENGE ourselves and our communities to unclutter our lives and become witnesses to the world today of authentic Christian values.



In response to this
mysterious call,
of which we stand
in awe, we have
assumed the title
Brother. We come
together in com-
munity as
brothers to live
out this call.

Although we each
come with our
particular his-
tory and com-
munity charism,
which distinguish
those who call them-
selves Brother,
nevertheless, we
hold much in
common.

Introduction to the
Washington Statement.



The Passionist



1985

number 11

a review of community life, apostolate and spirituality of the Congregation of the Passion, published for the english-reading world community of Passionists



The Passionist

The Passionist



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PREFACE

Last January an important step was taken in the life of this magazine. The two North American Provinces established an Editorial Board for THE PASSIONIST composed of members from both Provinces. This new venture in collaboration will certainly strengthen our ability to reflect seriously on our Passionist life.

For this issue, we asked several of our authors to reflect on the meaning of the passion today. Fr. Donald Senior, C.P. opens with a biblical reflection on the arrest of Jesus which illustrates a "contemporary" dimension present in the passion narratives. He shows how an awareness of contemporary experience, especially in situations of oppression, can lead to a fresh reading of the passion story.

Fr. Raphael Amrhein, C.P. then takes up the difficult challenge we each face, namely, the preaching of the Passion in a vital and meaningful way to the people of our day. He discusses two essential ingredients of effective proclamation: the contemporary understanding of current scriptural and theological insights into the sufferings and death of Jesus; and an understanding of the contemporary men and women who hear us preaching.

Fr. John Francis Kobler, C.P. sketches for us a broad vision of the efforts of the Second Vatican Council to respond to the passion of the contemporary world. He argues that in developing the image of "The People of God" the Council was calling the Church to assume its global responsibilities for human progress and development.

On Pentecost, 1985, Fr. Brendan Keevey, C.P., the Provincial Superior of St. Paul of the Cross Province, wrote a paper to the members of his province on ministry and mission. It is our privilege to reprint his paper here for your reflection.

Finally, I had asked Fr. Paul Wadell, C.P., assistant professor of Ethics at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago, to do a book review on "the most interesting book he has read this past year." He chose *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. When you read his review, I think you'll understand his fascination with this book.

Michael Higgins, C.P.
Editor

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The Contemporary Passion and the Passion of Jesus: Some Biblical Reflections

Our new Constitutions clearly affirm that the passion of Jesus is not simply a past historical event, but an ongoing reality. The mystery of dying and rising experienced by Jesus is, through the power of the Spirit, being experienced now by God's people. Because the mystery of death and hope is so vividly realized by the poor and the oppressed, our Constitutions single out this experience of the contemporary passion above all others:

We Passionists make the Paschal Mystery the center of our lives. We lovingly commit ourselves to the following of Jesus Crucified and set out to proclaim, in a spirit of faith and of charity, his Passion and death, not only as historical events in the past, but also as a reality still present in the lives of people, especially in the lives of those who are today "crucified" by injustice, by the absence of a deep appreciation for human life, and by the hungering for peace, truth and life (#61; see similar thoughts in #3).

This approach to the passion will, I believe, be most vital for the ongoing renewal of our life and ministry because it enables us to be both rooted in the Gospel and in touch with the reality of our times.

The conviction that the passion is a contemporary event is not a creation of our General Chapter nor of modern theology. Throughout the centuries Christians experiencing suffering and oppression have instinctively viewed their own pain as in some way fused with

the passion of Jesus, even though a variety of metaphors and theological models may have been used in an attempt to explain that connection. And, most important of all, this view of the passion has a firm biblical foundation. The passion of Jesus narrated in the four Gospels is not presented simply as a unique and powerful event of the past. In the very manner of their narration, the evangelists make it clear that the passion of Jesus is also the passion of the community.

This link between experience and Scripture is found throughout the Old and New Testaments and it has become a focus of modern biblical interpretation. Biblical studies (and theology as well) have increasingly turned to an analysis of contemporary experience in an effort to plumb more deeply the biblical text. Application of sociological models, for example, has made us much more aware of social, political and economic factors in the mission of Jesus and the life of the early church (cf., for example, C. Osiek, *What are They Saying About The Social Setting of the New Testament?* [New York: Paulist, 1984]). Use of Jungian categories has been applied to biblical symbolism in John and other biblical literature. Awareness of cultural anthropology and knowledge gained from medicine and psychology has heightened our appreciation of how taboos work in a culture and therefore help us appreciate the prophetic bite of Jesus' dealings with outcasts and the sick (e.g. M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger* [London: Rutledge & Kegan Paul, 1966]; B. Malina, *The New Testament World* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1981], etc.).

One brand of modern theology that has gained a lot of attention recently is liberation theology; as is well known, one of its foundations is that theology must derive from praxis or experience. Reading the Scriptures from the vantage point of the oppressed—as liberation theologians do—has brought a powerful new impulse to biblical interpretation (see the recent book by R. McAfee Brown, *Unexpected News: Reading the Bible Through Third World Eyes* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985]). Even though our ministry may be in a very different social context, we can find new meaning for our proclamation of the passion by being attentive to what Christians in the oppressed churches are teaching us.

In this article I would like to illustrate the “contemporary” dimension present in the passion narratives by a closer look at the arrest of Jesus. Here, too, awareness of contemporary experience—especially



In a sense the moment of arrest is enough, for in that arena of terror the values of both martyr and oppressor are dramatically displayed for memory to grasp.

in situations of oppression—can lead to a fresh reading of the passion story.

The violent arrest of Jesus under cover of darkness is reported by all four evangelists. Some biblical scholars are convinced that an ancient version of the passion story—prior to the appearance of the Gospels—may have begun with this scene. In John's Gospel this is still the case; after the long final discourse of chapters 13-17 the passion narrative proper begins in chapter 18 with the arrest.

It is significant how much attention the arrest scene holds in the Synoptic Gospels. The passion predictions that take place in the course of Jesus' ministry (cf. Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34 et par.) seem to center on the arrest more than on any other event of the passion: it is the "handing over" into the hands of sinful people that seems to grip the memory of the early Christians just as it rivets the attention of Jesus himself (the Greek term *paradidomai*, to "hand over" becomes almost a technical word in the Gospels). And as we shall point out, each evangelist uses this moment to draw a pointed contrast between the spirit of Jesus and that of his captors.

The reason for this attention becomes clear when we reflect on modern experiences of brutal oppression. Because we live in a new age of martyrdom we have the paradoxical advantage of appreciating in a first hand way some of the dynamics of violence. (As I write this article I just learned that Ezekiele Ramon, a young Italian missionary of the Comboni Order, active on behalf of the poor, was gunned down in Brazil. He had just come from meeting with a group of farmers, trying to talk them out of a violent course of action, when assassins hired by landowners murdered him. Ezekiele had been a student at CTU and I had him in several Bible courses where we discussed these very issues.) It is interesting to note in how many instances modern martyrdom accounts focus on the arrest. Often only the arrest has been publicly witnessed. The hammering on the door at night; the dragging away of the victim in a car or van. After this there is silence—no trace is ever found of the victim, or of the captors. Thousands of cases such as these have been documented in Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Eastern Europe and in many other places around the globe.

Witnesses who escape the violence remember those final moments of terror when people committed to peace and justice are seemingly

engulfed by the force of evil. Last words spoken to captors or companions, the comportment of the victim as they face the brutality and deceit of their enemies: these linger as the source for later story-telling. (In Central and South America a new cult of the martyrs has become an important part of popular piety.) The world famous play and film *The Diary of Anne Frank* was essentially a martyrdom story building toward the moment of arrest. As in so many of these accounts, the aftermath of arrest is anti-climactic, as the martyr endures interrogation, torture, summary trial and execution. In a sense the moment of arrest is enough, for in that arena of terror the values of both martyr and oppressor are dramatically displayed for memory to grasp.

Even though the passion of Jesus includes the events of interrogation, torture, trial and execution, the dramatic force of the arrest stands out. Here is the last moment of Jesus' freedom. Here the false values of his opponents and the weakness of his disciples will be revealed. Above all, here the integrity of Jesus will be confirmed.

Each evangelist presents the arrest scene in a noticeably different fashion, coinciding with the particular theological emphases of his gospel as a whole. But common to all of them is a reflection on violence—a motif inescapable in a scene of furtive, nighttime arrest. Allow me to make a few comments on each.

Mark 14:43-52

Mark's account is the least developed, but already the basic motifs to be expanded by the other evangelists can be found. Mark presents the arrest as a stark contrast between Judas and the armed mob, on the one hand, and Jesus on the other. The disciples serve as baffled witnesses—at first confused and then consumed by terror.

The arrest is clearly an act of treachery; Judas (whom Mark poignantly introduces as "one of the Twelve," 14:43) leads a "crowd with swords and clubs" mustered by the Jewish leaders. The reference to "swords and clubs" is important because this kind of oppressive power serves throughout the scene as the point of contrast with the power of Jesus. The air of tragedy is thick as Judas' friendship kiss becomes the ironic signal for the mob to seize Jesus.

It is at this point that Mark introduces a further note of mayhem in the scene. In the confusion "one of those who stood by" (14:47) draws a sword and slashes the ear of the High Priest's slave. Many commen-

tators have assumed that the one who drew the sword was a disciple. But this is to read Mark in the light of other, later, Gospels. As several recent interpreters have suggested there is no good reason for supposing that the "bystanders" were disciples. In fact Mark's scene is much more cogent and powerful when the swordbearer is seen as a member of the mob, not a friend of Jesus. His drawing of the sword is not in Jesus' defense but is an act of aggression. Note that Mark has Jesus address "them" (i.e., the crowd and the one inflicting violence) in Verse 48: "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs to capture me? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize me . . ."

This verse is the key to the arrest scene in Mark. The evangelist sees it as a dramatic confrontation between two types of power. On the one side are those with "swords and clubs." They are motivated by treachery. They work in the nighttime and their violence leads to wanton destruction, even to one of their own as in the confusion a sword is drawn and injures one of the mob. On the other side is Jesus whose fearless public teaching in the Temple did not need weapons or the cover of darkness for its validation.

The confrontation between two modes of power—one oppressive and destructive, the other free and life-giving—had been drawn throughout the Gospel of Mark. The evangelist had frequently noted Jesus' "power" (the Greek word *exousia* can mean "authority" or "power") in contrast to that of his opponents. After his first liberating act, freeing the man in the synagogue of Capernaum from a demon, the crowds acclaim Jesus because "he taught them with power (*exousia*) and not like their scribes" (Mark 1:22). Even more pointed is the discussion with James, John and the rest of the disciples near Jericho, as Jesus led his followers toward Jerusalem. There a clear line is drawn between oppressive power and the power of Jesus. The Sons of Zebedee had hungered for control, asking to be placed in positions of honor when Jesus came into his kingdom (10:37). In response Jesus sharply rebuked them. The leaders of the "Gentiles" (i.e., the non-believers) exhibited that kind of power towards their subjects. The words used here are very graphic in their description of oppressive power. These despots literally "lord it down upon" their people and "exert power down upon them" (the literal meaning of the verbs *katakurieuousin* and *katexousiazousin* used in this verse).

That kind of power is diametrically opposed to the power of the Son of Man "who came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (10:45). Mark has no doubt that Jesus is endowed with genuine power but it is not the power of oppression or coercive violence. It is the power that comes from authentic love and self-transcendence. It is that kind of power that the cross symbolizes.

The two exponents of these contrasting powers stand in dramatic confrontation in the Garden. The power of violence and oppression seems to be victorious; Jesus is seized and led away to his death. But the reader of the Gospel knows that this is not the last word; the power of the cross will ultimately triumph over the power of death. That seems to be the message of Jesus' final words: "Let the Scriptures be fulfilled!" (14:49).

Mark's arrest scene ends on a poignant note. The disciples who had accompanied Jesus to the Garden demonstrate that they have not yet grasped the meaning of all this. As Jesus had predicted (14:27), their weakness and fear leads them to be overwhelmed by the threat of violence. They flee in terror, casting aside their discipleship. A curious incident found only in Mark punctuates the scene and adds a further note of confusion and defeat to Mark's portrayal of the disciples: a young man who had followed Jesus is so afraid that he runs naked from the clutches of mob, leaving his cloak and his discipleship behind.

Matthew 26:47-56

Matthew incorporates all of Mark's account (with the exception of the naked disciple) but adds some important new features to the arrest scene.

As in Mark the entire arrest is a furtive, violent act against Jesus. The atmosphere of treachery is heightened by Matthew's attention to the figure of Judas. As he does on other occasions Matthew adds dialogue to the scenes in which Judas appears (cf. 26:15; 26:25) and this Gospel alone narrates Judas' tragic death (27:3-10). As Judas comes forward with the mob he kisses and greets his Master—"Hail, rabbi!"—but before the mob can seize Jesus, Matthew has Jesus himself show that he knows the heart of Judas: "Friend, for this (the kiss of treachery) you have come" (26:50).

Next comes the moment of violence. Matthew adds new drama to this scene by changing Mark's account: it is no longer simply a "by-

stander" who draws a sword but "one of those who were *with Jesus*" (26:51). A disciple has chosen to respond in kind to the mob's violence. This provokes a strong reaction from the Matthean Jesus:

"Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?" (26:52-54)

Matthew has clearly used the dramatic moment of the arrest to reinforce Jesus' teaching on non-retaliation. The words in the garden echo those of the Sermon on the Mount:

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also . . ." (5:38-39)

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you . . ." (5:43-44)



Throughout the Gospel Matthew emphasizes the "integrity" of Jesus. Unlike the Pharisees who "preach but do not practice" (23:3) Jesus

teaches and *does* the will of God. One of the most profound expressions of God's will is, according to Matthew's Gospel, the refusal to meet violence with violence. We demonstrate that we are children of God when we overcome violence with active love (5:45-48). This is what "fulfills" the Scriptures. For Matthew's community the issue of violent retaliation against an enemy or persecutor was not an abstract question or a bit of religious fantasy. In their tensions with Pharisaic Judaism and in the rigors of their mission, harassment and persecution were realities. Jesus' reinforcement of his teaching at the very moment of his arrest is a powerful reminder to Matthew's church. Jesus could have summoned "twelve legions of angels" to wreak vengeance on that sword-bearing crowd, but he did not do so—in obedience to the Scriptures.

Luke 22:47-53

It is fascinating to see how Luke picks up the threads of Mark's arrest scene and works them carefully into his own tapestry of Jesus.

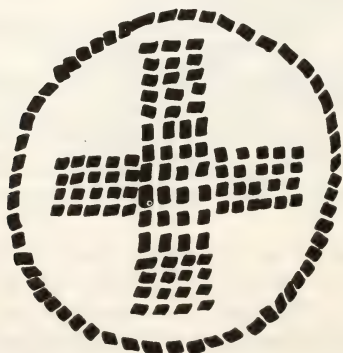
Once again the issue of violent retaliation becomes the center of focus. Luke uses his considerable narrative skills to present the issue in very vivid tones. Similar to Matthew, Luke changes the identity of the sword bearer from a member of the crowd to a follower of Jesus (Luke 22:49). But he also alters the sequence of events. After Judas' treacherous kiss and before the crowd can arrest Jesus, the disciple with the sword "saw what would follow" and decides to take action. Luke has the disciple ask Jesus the key question: "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" (22:49). But without waiting for Jesus' answer he lashes out at the high priest's slave and severs his right ear (Luke adds this bit of precision about which ear!). The force of Luke's narrative is that the disciple asks a leading question about violent retaliation—the very question that may have been asked many times in Luke's community and one continually asked today. Should we strike with the sword (or the bomb or the Uzzi submachine gun or with the Delta Strike force)?

The question and the act of violence stand in glaring contrast with Jesus' response: "No more of this!" And he touched his ear and healed him" (22:51). The healing touch and not an angry, destructive blade is the authentic expression of Christian power. Throughout his passion narrative Luke presents Jesus as the Spirit-filled martyr, who

gives testimony to God's compassion: forgiving his executioners, consoling the women of Jerusalem, saving the Good thief. And here in the Garden, Jesus once again allows his actions to teach.

There is one final element of Luke's arrest scene to be noted. Luke adds these words to Jesus' address to the crowd: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness" (22:53). Behind this terrible moment when Jesus loses his freedom and is unjustly seized by violent captors stands the "power of darkness." More than the other evangelists, Luke points to the demonic element in the passion drama. When Jesus had been tempted in the desert, Satan had left him alone "until an opportune time" (4:13). Luke clearly indicates that now—in the struggle of the passion—was that opportune time. As Judas puts into motion the plot against Jesus, Luke observes that the ultimate agent of death comes back into the gospel drama: "Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve . . ." (22:3).

There is a chilling sobriety in this motif of Luke. Evil and violence have Satan as their origin. The biblical assessment should be respected, even (or especially) in our modern empirically minded western world. The systemic patterns of violence that are so much a part of our modern world seem out of our control: the arms race, the weapons industry, the almost casual violence of our American cities, the bitter heritage of child abuse, the brutalities of National Security states, the documented torture of so many dictatorships of right and



left. Who is the parent of this evil in our world? For Luke's Gospel Jesus did not struggle merely with misguided religious leaders or a political system intent on subjection. Behind their violence and injustice stood the very power of death. And only the power of God coursing through Jesus could break evil's grip on humanity.

John 18:2-12

As we noted above, the passion story of John begins with the arrest. Although the basic scenario is similar to that of the synoptics, here as throughout the Gospel John's account is unique.

John develops the symbol of darkness inherent in the arrest story. With deft irony John has the crowd (reinforced with Roman soldiers) come to the garden "with lanterns and torches and weapons." These people of the night do not realize that they are approaching the "Light of the World." Throughout the passion story John emphasizes the triumph of Jesus over death; his crucifixion is in the paradox of faith, an enthronement.

This Johannine perspective is certainly evident in the arrest. Far from being a powerless victim, Jesus confronts his captors: "Whom do you seek?" They answer, "Jesus of Nazareth." When Jesus responds: "I am," they fall to the ground. This incredible display of the force of Jesus' person is repeated. Only when he allows them to approach and has safely dismissed his disciples (they do not flee as in Matthew and Mark's account), can the mob lay hands on him (18:8-9).

Jesus' words to the crowd—"I am"—are a translation of the Greek phrase *ego eimi*, a name for God in the Septuagint. Several times in the Gospel Jesus bears this name of God because he is the definitive revealer of God to the world. In his passion this revelation is most forceful and clear because John sees the death of Jesus as an act of friendship love—and such love is the very identity of God (3:16-17).

John, too, has Jesus reject violence at this crucial moment. Now it is "Simon Peter" who strikes with the sword (the slave is named "Malchus," another additional bit of information in John). As in the other gospels Jesus reacts strongly to this kind of retaliation: "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup with the Father has given me?" (18:11). This summary rejection of violence is reinforced by Jesus' words to Pilate at the trial: "My kingship is not of this world; if

my kingship were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingship is not from this world" (18:36). These words are most explicit—the "world" of values in which Pilate operates, a "world" of oppressive power, is totally different from the "world" in which Jesus is king. Jesus' entire mission is a revelation of nourishing, redemptive love, not of injustice and self-perpetuating violence.

The triumphant note of John's passion story, so apparent in the arrest scene, might strike us as far removed from ordinary human experience. Can we have anything in common with one who is able to say: "No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord . . ." (10:18)? But here again careful attention to the testimony of the martyr churches can bring new appreciation of John's portrayal. No authentic martyr is purely the victim of the oppressor. Those who work for justice freely choose to be where they are, in spite of the threats of violence. The recently published diaries and letters of Jean Donovan (see Ann Carrigan, *Salvador Witness* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985]) confirm that she was well aware of the possibility of death before her final return to El Salvador. But she went freely into that risk. No threat had power over her faith. She, and thousands like her, could authentically repeat the words of the Johannine Jesus: "No one takes my life from me; I lay it down of my accord."

Conclusion

The varied and careful enhancements of the arrest scene in the passion accounts indicate that the early church had reflected long and hard on this fateful moment. At his arrest Jesus acted with integrity, displaying the core values that had animated his entire mission. At the arrest was revealed the ultimate nature of violence. And here, too, the weakness of the disciples had been poignantly exposed.

JESUS OF NAZARETH

The Christians who remembered these stories knew that the challenge and reality of the passion was being lived out in their own churches as they faced harassment, persecution and even death in the cause of justice. They retold Jesus' story, too, because they knew that the violence inflicted on them was also a seduction to take up the same means in redressing their injuries. But the memory of Jesus' response to violence was a constant sign that the power of the Gospel was different from the power of the world.

Many other scenes of the passion narrative could make the same basic point I have tried to illustrate here: the passion was not simply a dramatic chapter of past history, but an ongoing reality in the life of Jesus' disciples. Reading this story from the vantage point of those who know what oppressive force can do may not be the only possible reading of the text, but it is a genuine one. Attentiveness to contemporary Christian experiences can give the passion fresh meaning for ourselves and for those to whom we proclaim it.



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Preaching the Passion in the Contemporary World

Some years ago religious educator, Gerard Sloyan, authored a book, *Nothing of Yesterday Preaches*. That provocative title focuses two truths about preaching, one explicitly and one implicitly. The explicit truth is that today's people must hear the gospel proclaimed in today's idiom. The implicit truth is that that gospel is the good news about Jesus, who "is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Thus, the perennial challenge of the preacher: to convey the timeless gospel to time-bound persons . . . in a timely way.

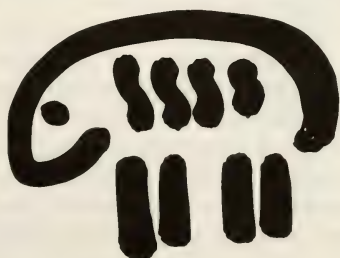
This challenge, of course, confronts us who proclaim the gospel from a Passion-perspective. If we are to proclaim effectively to moderns the love of Jesus as eminently expressed in his sufferings and death, we must speak with the accent of today. Any other accent will stigmatize us as alien to the contemporary world. Our contemporaries will not accept the "gospel of the Passion" spoken with medieval accent, or with the 18th century accent of St. Paul of the Cross, or even the mid-20th century accent of pre-Vatican II. Should we speak with those accents, our speech, like Peter's, will betray us.

What is necessary, then, to "preach the Passion" in ways which our contemporaries find meaningful? Probably many things. In this essay I want to consider two: a contemporary understanding of current scriptural and theological insights into the sufferings and death of Jesus; an understanding of the contemporary men and women who hear us preach. After dealing with these two elements, I will make some suggestions which I hope will be helpful to Passionist preachers.

Current scripture scholars are emphasizing the well-accepted fact that the Passion narratives, though they deal with some of the most historical elements of the gospels, are not "live reports from the scene" after the manner of television newscasting. They are theological reflections marshalled in a particular way to contribute to a specific understanding of the total career of Jesus. This "understanding" links the Passion-experience of Jesus with the Hebrew scriptures and with the pre-Passion experience of Jesus himself. Thus, from a scriptural perspective, the importance of the Passion narratives is not primarily the literally "excruciating" physical and emotional pain of Jesus, but the *meaning* of this pain vis-a-vis preceding and subsequent salvation history and the preceding events of Jesus' own life.

In times past, the approach of the preacher to the gospel narratives of the Passion was often "concordist," treating "the Passion" as if there were only one scriptural account of Jesus' sufferings and death. Naturally, such an approach resulted from the conflation of common elements and the interpolation of elements unique to each gospel. This approach, however, disconnected many elements from their contextual meaning within the totality of the scriptures and the totality of the preceding life of Jesus. It tended to overlook the *meaning* of the various elements of a particular evangelist's narrative.

It is this "meaning" upon which scripture scholars and serious scripture readers are concentrating today. Thus, exegetes like our own Donald Senior speak and write eloquently about the four ways in which the evangelists describe Jesus' death. Moreover, they point out the connections the evangelists make between aspects of Jesus' suffer-



ing and values expressed in his living. Thus, his sufferings and death are interpreted as the inevitable result of a life lived to break down barriers of manipulative entrenchment, of alienating exclusivity, of enslaving injustice. They were the outcome of a life which negated the fallacy that any restricted group of people had a corner on the love and mercy of Yahweh. As Donald Senior puts it: "Jesus died because of the way he lived."

To speak effectively to the men and women of today, the preacher of the Passion must preach out of this kind of understanding of the Passion narratives. To do otherwise is to proclaim a suffering Jesus unintelligible to the contemporary intelligent Christian. If the "gospel of the Passion" is to be "Good News for Modern Man," it must be proclaimed in a way which makes it integral with the whole of Sacred Scripture.

Currently, there is a series of theological monographs on various Catholic doctrines whose titles begin: "What Are They Saying About _____?" The contemporary preacher of the Passion must ask contemporary theologians: "What are you saying about the sufferings and death of Jesus?"

Perhaps, at the outset it is useful to advert to what many theologians are *no longer* saying. Many current theologians are no longer theologizing about the Passion using the words "atonement," "expiation," "redemption," "sacrifice," "salvation," "satisfaction." That is not to say that they deny the doctrinal realities which these concepts described. It is simply to say that these terms emerged from a way of theologizing no longer universally current. That way was largely essentialist. It began with certain christological concepts, usually rooted in particular philosophical systems, and argued "from above." This approach tended to negate or by-pass the data about Jesus which the gospels present.

Many contemporary theologians no longer do theology in that way. They begin with the scriptural data and argue "from below." This method of theologizing is, in contrast to the former, more existentialist. Such a mode of procedure is attuned to the theorizing in other disciplines today. Because contemporary men and women theorize more existentially, the contemporary Christian (and his non-Christian counterpart) may be largely nescient of the previous terminology in which the Passion of Jesus was discussed. Or, if they are

conversant with it, it probably does not speak dynamically to them. This situation was underscored by Fr. Ernst Henau, C.P., in a presentation on the preaching of the Passion given at Catholic Theological Union, in Chicago, in the Spring of 1985. Fr. Henau notes: "Indeed it may be said that men of today scarcely know what to make of such key words as sacrifice, redemption, satisfaction. They no longer belong to their world of experience. There is a great danger that preaching which continues to manipulate these images and concepts will no longer touch the man of today so as to arouse his hope. The danger is that we would be offering him replies to questions which are not his and fail to give him a response to the real problems which haunt him."

A second thing theologians are no longer saying is an unqualified: "Mankind was saved by the sufferings and death of Jesus." Since the flourishing of "resurrection theology" in the 1950's, theologians universally recognize the place of the resurrection (and, more recently, of the totality of Jesus' earthly life, as Pope John Paul II did in "Redemptor hominis") in the salvific process. This recognition is formulated in the expression "Paschal Mystery."

In this essay, when the term "preaching the Passion" is used, it should be understood as a synecdoche for the total saving action of

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Jesus. "Preaching the Passion" (or an analogous term) is retained here to acknowledge the charismatic emphasis of Passionist proclamation of the total gospel.

What are contemporary theologians saying about the Passion? Two categories of modern theologizing do seem to speak to the contemporary person "so as to arouse his hope." Providentially and happily they are categories eminently serviceable in proclaiming the "gospel of the Passion." They are the categories of "memory" and "story."

In recent years theologians have been articulating a concept of "memory" that is creative and dynamic. In this articulation "memory" is not mere recall, not an intellectual/imaginative exercise akin to the old TV show "You Were There," not a nostalgic hearkening back to "the good old days," nor a "Can You Top This" dredging up of "the bad old days." It is a consistent, creative mental imaging of a significant past event which has significant impact in "the now." Memory in this sense continues to make here-and-now what the thing remembered made at its origin. Memory in this sense literally "re-members"; it makes the person a "member," a participant in the event brought forward from the past. It is re-collection about which one cannot remain neutral or uninvolved. For this reason Johannes B. Metz refers to it as "dangerous memory."

Theologians apply this concept of memory to many religious realities. It is the concept of memory Martin Buber had in mind, when he said about the Jews: "We are a people of memory." Whenever Jews remember Passover and the Exodus, this memory creates them into a "freed people" *now* as those events created them such in Egypt and in the Sinai.

This allusion to Passover and the Exodus underscores the usefulness of "memory" in preaching the Passion. If Jesus was the paschal lamb and his spilt blood "the blood of the new and everlasting covenant," then, whenever Christians make "memory" of this event they continue to become the new Israel. Similarly, when the story of the Passion is proclaimed integrally and cohesively, the people who hear that "memory" recounted become in the here-and-now what the Jesus-event made them when it first occurred.

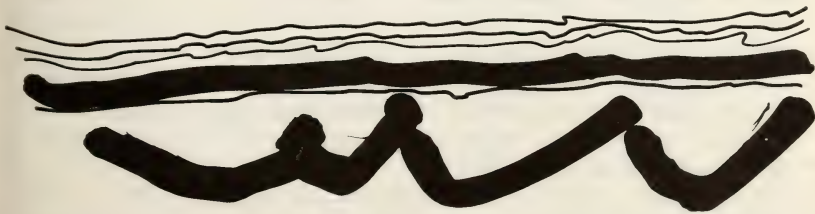
To proclaim the memory of the Passion, then, is not to indulge in gory piousness—even for the sake of stirring up feelings of compunction, contrition, reparation, or love. It is to "re-member" Christians

. . . to facilitate their awareness that in the Paschal Mystery they are now members of that "one body, one spirit, in Christ." This awareness presents them with a challenge that must be faced *now!* And lived *now!*

There are few theological realities to which the category of "memory" applies so fittingly as the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Jesus. From this it is evident why "memory of the Passion" has superseded "devotion to the Passion" as the fundamental expression of Passionist charismatic commitment.

The second category of modern theologizing which speaks forcefully to the contemporary person is "story." In recent years several theologians, chiefly John Shea and John Navone, S.J., have worked intensively with "story." They emphasize the place of narrative in the endeavor of explaining how God deals with His people. In this mode of doing theology, narrative is preferable to theorizing. In a kind of up-dating of the Imitation of Christ's famous statement: "I would rather feel compunction than know how to define it," story-theologians are contending in effect: I learn more about compunction from a story about it than from a dialectic over it.

Here, too, we readily see the implications of "story" in preaching the Passion. The scriptural accounts of Jesus' sufferings and death are cast in narrative form. Indeed, in each of the gospels the Passion-Resurrection section reads like a well-woven short story, complete with protagonist and antagonists, with the major issues religious and political (Who was it who said that the most controversy is generated by religion and politics?!), with intrigue and suspense, with cowardice and heroism, with pathos and violence, with penultimate tragedy, but with an ultimately "happy ending."



If the category of "memory" applies so superbly to the Passion, equally superbly does "story" apply to it.

The contemporary preacher of the Passion finds a wealth of innovative, impact-full possibilities for proclaiming the "gospel of the Passion" in "memory" and "story."

If it is hyperbolically true that nothing of yesterday's scriptural and theological insights preaches the Passion to modern men and women, it is equally true that modern men and women form an audience vastly different from yesterday's. Yesterday's preaching of the Passion, by and large, "will no longer touch the man of today so as to arouse his hope," to use Fr. Henau's expression.

For one thing, a graphic blood-and-pain portrayal of the physical sufferings of Jesus will scarcely move a modern audience glutted on blood-and-guts! The nightly newscast bombards us with scenes of people in incredible agony. Exposure to the ghastly violence of "Rambo" or "Rocky" I through III (. . . with IV on the way!) has largely inured our society to bodily suffering. By comparison, a crucifixion is "small potatoes"!

Moreover, traditional homiletic approaches to the Passion have almost made a "thing" of that experience; even the phrase "the Passion" tends to do that. We would do better to speak of "the sufferings of Jesus" or "Jesus in his sufferings." For when we de-personalize or "reify" an experience that is personal and relational, to a large extent we de-fuse it. This phenomenon is bad news/good news. The "bad news" is that "the Passion" may no longer move people. The "good news" is that the penchant of contemporary persons for the personal and relational enables that approach to Jesus' experience to make impact.

Thirdly, in today's world the great issues of life, the great questions, the great challenges concern "meaning." After sorting through the presenting problems of modern men and women, one soon realizes that the real pain people feel is that they don't "mean" anything to anyone, that their lives have no "meaning," that their actions are "meaningless"—indeed, that there is no such thing as "meaning." To many moderns the horror is not pain and death; it is meaninglessness and absurdity.

These considerations suggest some approaches to the contemporary preaching of the Passion.

It is a happy wedding of circumstances that today's exegetes see the true issue of the Passion to be that of the "meaning" of Jesus experience

at a time when men and women see "meaning" to be the real issue of their lives. Effective preaching of the Passion links the pressing issues of "meaning" in human life and in the sufferings of Jesus. Dealing with Jesus' Passion in terms of "meaning" is something of today that *will* preach!

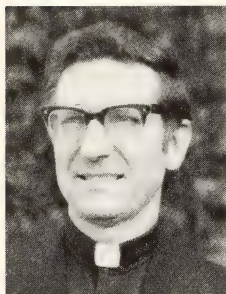
As previously noted, treating the Passion as dynamic "memory" strikes a resonating chord in our contemporaries. To portray the Passion as that insistent "memory" which continually creates individual Christians and the Christian community, and continually challenges both, is something of today which will preach.

Contemporary men and women interpret their lives as "story." Most of us are eager to tell our "story," and to learn from our "story." The self-help dimension of one's story is seen from a book, co-authored by Sam Keen and Anne Valley Fox in the 1970's, *Telling Your Story: A Guide to Who You Are and Who You Can Be*. We are also intensely interested in the stories of others. It is significant that biography and autobiography are perennially on the Best Seller list. It is again providentially coincident that, against this background, "story" as a theological category should emerge so strongly. To relate the story of Jesus' sufferings in terms of meaning to people taken up with their story as a search for meaning is, indeed, something of today which will preach. It will simultaneously address the challenge addressed to the Congregation in the Planning Document of the General Chapter of 1982: to find the link between the crucified Jesus and the "crucified" of today.

In practico-practical terms, what might these approaches look like? What scriptures are pertinent? What topics might those scriptures suggest? What themes could those topics bring forth?

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(biblical, theological, historical, literary) "according to the mode of the one receiving it" today. That mode emphasizes "story" and "meaning." If we can succeed in touching the meaning of men and women's lives with the story inspired by the memory of Jesus' sufferings/resurrection, then everything of today will preach. And once again, every contemporary person, as his predecessors, will hear apostles "speaking in his own tongue about the marvels God has accomplished" (Acts 2:11).



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The Myth of the People of God

Introduction

The term, People of God, was employed by *Lumen gentium* at Vatican II to describe the Church. Since the early part of this century this theme has been subject to intensive reflection and research.¹ A concise history of this research up until the time of the Council has been provided by Y. Congar, R. Schnackenburg, and J. Dupont.² Needless to say, both articles focus on the theoretical, academic concerns of specialists engaged in biblical and theological studies.

By 1937, however, a slightly different *pragmatic* tonality had crept into religious reflection on this theme. This new development is important since it later had a profound effect on the style of reflection to be used at Vatican II. This new pastoral mentality is first discernible in Dom Anscar Vonier's *The People of God*.³ Here Vonier was writing as something of a bystander to the main vitalistic thrust of European Catholic thought which in 1943 would culminate in Pius XII's great encyclical on the Mystical Body. Frankly, Vonier was not totally comfortable with this Catholic trend of thought.

When he looked about at the harsh realities of his ominous era, Vonier saw that the militant historical forces of that day—Nazism, Fascism, Communism—were all intent on shaping a *people* and the solidarity associated with quite specific and concrete corporate action in the socio-political sphere. Laicism and secularism, for their part, were also intent on blocking Christians from exercising any effective social influence. ("Efficiency in the *temporal* order" would later become a prime concern of Pope John XXIII in *Humanae Salutis*.⁴)

In such an environment Vonier worried that the ascendancy of the theme of the Mystical Body offered Christians such a highly spiritualized image of the Church that they would have an easy refuge from pressing social tasks at hand. To his way of thinking, the rich biblical notion of the People of God provided a theological paradigm of the Church which would assist Catholics in eliciting the psycho-social responses implicit in the moral values portrayed by the Mystical Body. In this way he hoped to develop an ecclesial *countercultural* force which, with time, would begin to mitigate the dominant secular and political trends of that day.

The "sense" of these trends in theological reflection

From the above observations we can notice two currents of thought at work. The first is the product of the universities and their theological faculties; its methodology—for the most part—is some blend of scholasticism and historical research. There is a long-standing, tacit assumption that the refinements achieved by this type of study either correlate with or critique the grassroots praxis of Catholicism at all levels. The operative model here (again, "for the most part") is that of the theoretical natural sciences in relationship to the applied sciences. Although this theoretical vein of thought reflected on both the Mystical Body and the People of God as thematic descriptions of the Church, it was the Mystical Body which was first appropriated by the magisterium to express the reality of the mystery under consideration.

Only as Europe was rapidly descending into the madness of World

PEOPLE OF GOD

War II was the *practical* utility of the People of God appreciated in a fuller way. This second trend is symptomatic of a pastoral "gravity shift" in religious thinking where the acting priorities are not established by academic standards but by socio-political problems and the concrete needs of the faithful. In this situation doctrines are reconsidered and reevaluated in more utilitarian terms for their "service potential" to meet ecclesial and human needs. A comparable gravity

shift had already occurred in the liturgical movement in the transition from Guéranger's view of the liturgy to that of Beauduin.⁵ What is distinctive about Vonier's style of reflection, however, is that he deals with the theme of the People of God as *complementing* that of the Mystical Body. This point will assume its true importance when we reflect on how Vatican II handled these two themes.

The implications of this at Vatican II: an overview

If for a moment we may characterize the pre-Vatican II doctrine of the Mystical Body as formulating a somewhat "transcendental" view of the Church and Vonier's more down-to-earth handling of his subject-matter as the "pragmatic" view of the Church, then what the bishops did at Vatican II was to *fuse* both formulations into an intelligibly coherent whole. This transformation was done at the level of theoretical pastoral theology. Accordingly, when the bishops described the Church as the People of God, they were thereby involved in formulating what, in phenomenological circles, is today known as a *transcendental-pragmatic*.⁶

By a transcendental-pragmatic I here mean that the *theoretical* construct (e.g., the People of God), although constituted in a scientifically responsible way, takes its concrete sense and meaning from its orientation to the *practical* problem or limit-situation to which it is applied. In phenomenological reflection on religious matters this is not exactly a new procedure. A pioneering example of it may be found in the works of Gerardus Van Der Leeuw.⁷ Within such a purview were we to speak theoretically (or "transcendentally") about doctrinal substance, we could say that the christocentric nature of the Church remains forever unchanged regardless of the theme chosen: e.g., Mystical Body, People of God, Spouse of Christ, etc. However, when any such theoretical paradigm is "subordinated" or applied in a pragmatic way to serve twentieth-century needs of a humanity on the brink of self-annihilation, it takes on radically different *practical* implications from the way this paradigm or model was applied to meet the needs of the primitive Christian community or that of later ages.

Once we begin to understand how a transcendental-pragmatic functions, we begin to appreciate that reflection on the theory of either the Mystical Body or the People of God is the *easy* part of the problem. Admittedly, one can get lost in the historical antecedents of

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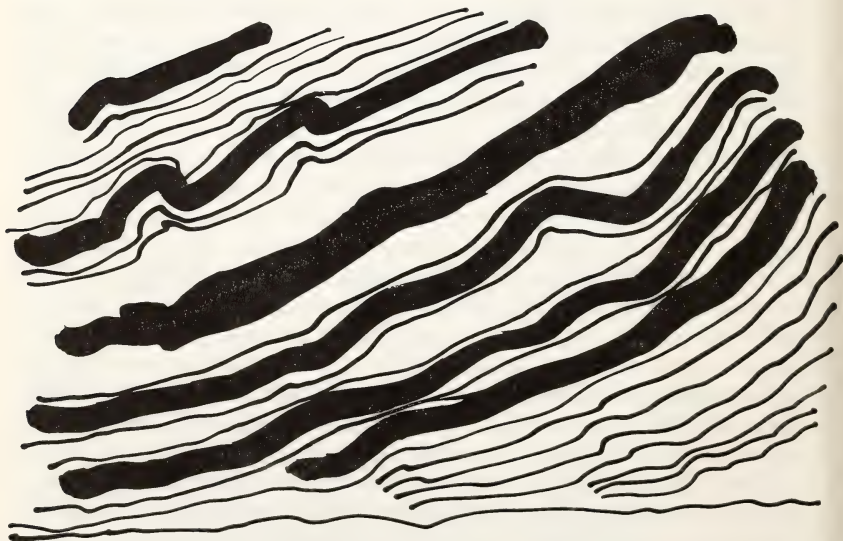
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Once we begin to understand how a transcendental-pragmatic functions, we begin to appreciate that reflection on the theory of either the Mystical Body or the People of God is the *easy* part of the problem. Admittedly, one can get lost in the historical antecedents of

these ideas, but that is an in-built liability of critical historical method itself. However, if one sticks to the scholastic or phenomenological antecedents of these ideas, their respective theoretical content is relatively clear. The really difficult part to comprehend in the transcendental-pragmatic couplet is the *pragmatic* dimension since it has its roots both in theory and descending levels of concreteness (praxis). There is an analogous case in intellectual history which may help us understand some of the complexities involved here.

In the sixteenth century everybody "saw" a geocentric universe until Copernicus formulated a new helio-centric model. This model was a totally mathematical or theoretical construct. Although the universe remained unchanged in appearance, the new model required on the part of people a shift of the visual gestalt which involved no little psychological shock and, with time, enormous problems regarding the physics ("praxis") of its celestial mechanics. Somewhat in the same fashion John XXIII viewed the empirical data of a disjointed human-



ity and perceived a radically new model or gestalt under development: that of the peacemaker. The bishops at Vatican II viewed the same data, approved John's fundamental insights, and formulated them as the corporate, ecclesial model of the People of God. While the Council has presented us with this new *theoretical* model of our religious universe, we have yet to figure out the operating principles (praxis) of its "celestial mechanics." From this point on, our reflections in this paper hope to assist our growth of understanding regarding this process.

Some necessary postulates

In order to get to the main topic of this paper (i.e., "The *Myth* of the People of God"), I have to postulate here some assumptions on which I am basing my reflections.⁸ The main problem at Vatican II was not religion or theology, but MAN.⁹ In order to handle this problem in a contemporary way the Council in its two doctrinal and one pastoral constitution employed a methodology which was an application of classical phenomenology. The intended purpose of this method was to achieve the "revelation of man to himself," as John XXIII formulated the challenge.¹⁰ To the extent we appreciate that this work was carried out at the level of theory, then we may say that Vatican II produced an *anthropological theology*.

The phenomenological thematization of the Church as the People of God at Vatican II was intended to *complement* the doctrine of the Mystical Body developed prior to the Council within the scholastic tradition of theology.¹¹ The "mystical" (or vertical) dimension is handled by *Dei verbum*, whereas the horizontal becoming in history of the Church's "body" is described in *Lumen gentium*. If the previous scholastic tradition may be described as man's *ascent* to the (transcendental) God, then the theology of Vatican II represents the same tradition in its *descent* from God in the (pragmatic) service of mankind. To the extent this "descent" is accomplished with the aid of phenomenology, the reflection is done in a transtemporal, theoretical way, and may be said to be presenting a theology of history—or even better, a theology of the historical consciousness of the Church. This style of reflection, then, may be qualified as teleological-historical. Perhaps it would be useful to dwell momentarily on the way phenomenology has structured these two important doctrinal constitutions.

The inner time-consciousness of the Church

The structure peculiar to *Dei verbum* and *Lumen gentium* is shaped by the nature of the Church's inner time-consciousness. The *synchronic* view of revelation in the "eternal now" is provided by *Dei verbum* whose conceptually (noematically) unifying paradigm for scripture, tradition, and all religious signs, symbols, and words is found in the Glorified Christ as the fullness of God's revelation.¹² As the key-stone in this system of reflection the Glorified Christ, as Logos-Shepherd, functions as a *concrete* universal (or "ur-universal," if you will). The *diachronic* view of the Church in linear, eschatological time is provided by the People of God, which *Lumen gentium* chooses as a theme when the Church reflects on itself as incarnate body-subject.

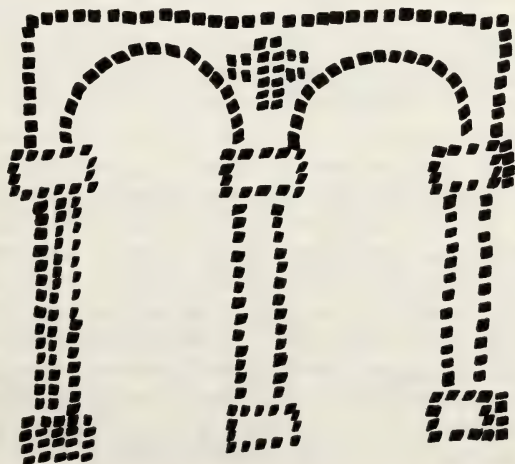
In the above phenomenological context *Dei verbum* presents the "transcendental" dimension of the transcendental-pragmatic couplet, whereas *Lumen gentium* presents the "pragmatic" dimension. This is a theoretical view of the Church, if you can imagine a "theory" which is pre-scientific, pre-philosophical, and pre-cultural: i.e., a *proto-theology*. (In such a context many today prefer the term, "hermeneutics.") It is, however, really presenting a field theory of the consciousness which permeates the religious life-world of the Church. In short, it sets the bi-polar horizon, or limit-situation, of that *community of communication* known as the Church. Since Christ is the paradigm which totally orchestrates this field of consciousness and since it is actively constituted by the ecclesial, human experience of Christ, we may say it is a totally "hominized" field of consciousness (*Dasein*). In other words, the gravity shift involved in the internal workings of Vatican II's style of reflection marks a departure from any model of theology purportedly based on some science or philosophy in favor of one connected with the lived-experience of a familiar and taken-for-granted life-world. It was somewhat inevitable, then, that such a religious field of consciousness would in its theoretical or noematic formulations develop an anthropological (*Dasein*) theology.¹³

Towards a theological anthropology

Unlike Vatican I the Second Vatican Council was not a doctrinal council where the formalizations were hammered out within the strictures of classical scholasticism. Nor was it a reform council in the pattern of Trent. Pope John confirmed that point prior to the Council by

his own high estimation of the modern Church's achievements: "It has [. . .] strengthened itself socially in unity; it has been reinvigorated intellectually; it has been interiorly purified and is thus ready for trial."¹⁴ However, the dire problems discerned by Vonier in the Europe of 1937 had by 1961 become *global* problems complicated by nuclear weapons, proliferating technologies, North-South economic imbalances, and a host of other difficulties.

In such a context both Vonier and Pope John XXIII were confronted by essentially the same pragmatic challenge: how to get doctrine effectively operative in the *temporal* order.¹⁵ It was this compelling urge to put doctrine at the service of twentieth-century global human needs which necessitated Vatican II's pastoral gravity shift in religious thinking. In retrospect we may say that its theological engineering feat compares favorably with that well-known project of reversing the direction of flow for the Chicago River. The cognitive shift involved in the intentionality of Vatican II's reflections transmuted the overt anthropological theology, formulated in *Dei verbum* and *Lumen gentium*, into a theological anthropology. This was done in such a way as not to disturb the intellectual coherence of the Council's total grounding in Christ (i.e., its ecclesial christocentrism).



Anthropology and the multiple re-incarnations of Christ

The major question at this point is how do we discern this cognitive gravity shift, this subtle transition from a transcendental focus to a pragmatic one? The phenomenon which we are about to describe is a well-known one. In the twentieth-century history of phenomenology it is much the same transition which Husserl had to make at the end of his life when he came to write *The Crisis*.¹⁶ If we can appreciate that the two doctrinal constitutions of Vatican II are the living mind of the Church reflecting on the concrete human relationships internal to her own community of communication and thereby formulating their *meaning for her*, then the discernment process is very much simplified. This style of reflection was pioneered in Catholic thought by Gabriel Marcel who experienced:

the haunting sense of the *concrete* interpersonal relations which philosophy has to confront in the "mystery" of our inescapable involvement with others. [. . .] In fact, *being-with-others* is the nature of *selfhood*.¹⁷

As we progress in this complex style of phenomenological reflection, we begin to appreciate that it involves a compenetration of the multiple "horizons" of the human consciousness in one simultaneous glance.¹⁸ When, as at Vatican II, the glance is essentially christocentric, we also begin to realize that this reflection on the Whole Christ in its comprehensive concreteness, as manifested in the multiple descending levels of human consciousness (and, ultimately, even the subconscious), integrates within itself a correlated reflection on the Whole Man (i.e., a religious anthropology). Implicate with this process is a "re-incarnation" of Christ at each phenomenologically discernible level of concrete consciousness.¹⁹ In a pastoral, but very sophisticated way the Church is *demonstrating* some of the complexities involved in the biblical injunction: "Have this mind among yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5 sq.). A problem relative to the discernment process will develop later on when we see consciousness descending into the level of the subconscious, but that can be discussed as the occasion arises. At the present, then, we can say that the action-response dynamics and patterns discernible in this conscious process, as we have discussed it up to this point, sketches the ecclesial egology as it re-expresses its own selfhood in the thought-forms and limit-situation of the twentieth century.

Gaudium et spes and the dogmatic constitutions

The transcendental-pragmatic developed by Vatican II is not a static but a *dialectical* construct. *Dei verbum*, as the consciousness of the Church reverently receiving God's revealed mysteries, represents the transcendental horizon open to her view. The pragmatic response to this vision is presented in a teleological-historical way by *Lumen gentium*'s sketch of the People of God. Both reflections, as scholastics would say, are conducted at the *speculative* level. At the *speculative-practical* level, as found in *Gaudium et spes*, a new re-ordering of dialectical relationships is established. Here the religious notion of the People of God, as discussed above, becomes the transcendental component, whereas the human problems of a turbulent twentieth-century world (as portrayed in this pastoral constitution) provide the pragmatic challenge, or horizon, for the Church's mission in the modern world. In the light of this pragmatic Paul VI could say at the close of Vatican II: "The old story of the Samaritan has been the model of the spirituality of the Council."²⁰ It is only in this dialectical correlation of *Lumen gentium* and *Gaudium et spes* that we come to a quasi-theoretical comprehension of the *integral pragmatic* at the heart of Vatican II. Although we have yet to descend to the *practico-practical* level, it may be well for us to pause here and reflect on some of the practical implications of what we have been saying up to this point.

The integral pragmatic of Vatican II involves a serious gravity shift from the ecclesial christocentrism found in *Lumen gentium* to the Good Samaritan model of service provided by *Gaudium et spes*.²¹ The pas-

Since the end of World War II much of our learning-experience has been growing up to the full realization of the harsh realities of today's world.

toral challenge of *Gaudium et spes* does, indeed, complement the spiritual teachings of *Lumen gentium*, just as the phenomenological style of reflection at Vatican II complements the scholastic style used by the Church since the thirteenth century. No scholar, however, can afford to ignore or gloss over the significant differences in each type of complementarity. This is especially the case with the integral pragmatic of *Gaudium et spes* since it provides the preliminary survey of the paths over which the spiritual and moral forces of the People of God are expected to travel in the modern world. This trend of thought seems to have two immediate consequences. First, any religiously self-serving interpretation of Vatican II's aggiornamento is a distortion of the Council's authentic intent. Secondly, the most basic form of "ecumenism" is for the People of God to form a United Human Front with all men of good will to combat those forces threatening the very survival of mankind or eroding the authentic sense of what it means to be a human being.

To summarize, we may say: the three constitutions—*Dei verbum*, *Lumen gentium*, and *Gaudium et spes*—make integral sense only when read as *one* constitution in three correlated parts. It is the contemporary limit-situation posed by *Gaudium et spes* which formulates the ultimate, practical goal of the Council which John XXIII first sketched in a preliminary way in *Humanae Salutis* when he called the Council. By reason of Vatican II's sophisticated methodology we then appreciate its "new" presentation of the Church as the People of God as also being a transcendental-pragmatic oriented to a *global* strategic vision which, almost of necessity, implies a massive project in civilization-building. Out of all these reflections should come some inkling of the complexity of the *pastoral* theology which Vatican II has formulated.

Vatican II as a phenomenology of religion

By reason of their religious focus the two dogmatic constitutions of Vatican II provide a phenomenology of religion. In America the most well-known practitioner of this style of religious analysis is Mircea Eliade of the University of Chicago.²² Vatican II has, as a matter of fact, achieved for Catholicism a cultural objective which Eliade had proposed for comparative religious studies: i.e., the development of a "total and creative hermeneutics" for every kind of human encounter with the sacred in order to open "new perspectives to Western

thought, to philosophy properly speaking as well as to artistic creations."²³ In his academic and professional analysis of religions Eliade maintains the objective mindset proper to the scientist who, in a sense, always remains the outside observer looking in on the phenomena under inspection. Although employing essentially the same descriptive techniques in constituting their notion of the People of God, the bishops/theologians at Vatican II did so as participants of this religious life-world and as sharers in this community of communication in which their dialogue made "sense."

Since the phenomenology of religion developed by Eliade and the two dogmatic constitutions of Vatican II are formulated at the same speculative level, both phenomenologies have a common meeting-place in the notion of *myth*. Eliade describes the notion in this fashion:

Myth narrates a sacred history; it relates an event that took place in primordial Time, the fabled time of the "beginnings." In other words, myth tells how, through the deeds of Supernatural Beings, a reality came into existence . . . In short, myths describe the various and sometimes dramatic breakthroughs of the sacred (or the "supernatural") into the World . . . the myth is regarded as a sacred story, and hence a "true history," because it always deals with *realities*.²⁴

Since the practical implications for human living are usually not explicitly apparent from such abstract definitions of myth, we generally have to supplement our readings in the phenomenology of religion with the works of cultural anthropologists, such as Lévi-Strauss.²⁵ In this way we somewhat generically approximate the level of reflection found in the pastoral constitution, *Gaudium et spes*. However, from our discussion of the transcendental-pragmatic constituted by Vatican II we can see that the bishops' reflection integrated both levels of reflection as exemplified by the phenomenology of religion and cultural anthropology. At the Council this was not some academic *tour de force*, but a task undertaken in deadly earnest. At a turning point in human history the Council's phenomenology of religion recast its core-myth, its sacred history or narrative, in order to serve the contemporary needs of mankind.

This dramatic breakthrough of the sacred into the World occurred at Vatican II when the bishops, reflecting on their own concrete expe-

riences of Christ in their lives, returned to primordial Time by way of *anamnesis* through Word and Sacrament.²⁶ Having achieved a renewed and living awareness of the supreme reality at the heart of their religious existence, they re-presented this Christian "myth" as the People of God. To the extent this myth (transcendentally) structures and renders meaningful the *a priori* concrete experiences of the bishops from which it is derived, this myth not only presents an image of the twentieth-century Church, but also a (pragmatic) Vision of the New Humanity necessary for the survival and development of mankind in the modern world. In both instances, of course, we are talking about an image or vision which focuses on the *moral* demands required of men in their contemporary existence.

The descent to the practico-practical level

The above understanding of myth, important as it may be, ever remains a product of the academic tradition, the embodiment of MIND. Its primary function is to illumine the "transcendental" side of the transcendental-pragmatic formulated at Vatican II. Some of the practical facets of myth are reflected in the concept of "socialization" developed by *Gaudium et spes* or the supplementary discussion of "culture" found in *Ad gentes*, The Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church. However, the socio-politically operative idea of myth in the twentieth century is not a product of mind but of the WILL. Since the Council nowhere descends to the practico-practical order in its new eschatological vision of the Church and Humanity, this has left the Church at a distinct disadvantage in the postconciliar period. Even though we may admit, in a somewhat cerebral fashion, the priority of mind over will, we cannot really appreciate the practical implications of this stance in the area of myth unless we understand the use of myth in the socio-political arena over the past century and a half. Our forthcoming discussion on the recent history of myth should clarify this problem and also help us to appreciate the mythic reformulation of the People of God in its intended purpose as a *countercultural* moral force in the modern world.

The pragmatic antecedents of myth in Hegel

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Hegel formulated a practical plan for social renewal which has had a profound, though often dis-

guised, influence on European political history. H. S. Harris provides us with the pertinent passage capsulizing Hegel's Grand Plan:

Until we make the Ideas aesthetic, that is mythological, they have no interest for the people [Volk], and conversely until mythology is rational, the philosopher must be ashamed of it. Thus in the end enlightened and unenlightened must clasp hands, mythology must become philosophical, and the people rational, and philosophy must become mythological, in order to make the philosophers sensible. Then reigns eternal unity among us. Never the scornful glance [i.e., of the philosopher despising the superstitious believer], never the blind trembling of the people before its wise men and priests. The first awaits *equal* development of *all* forces, of what is peculiar to each and of what is common to all . . . No force shall any longer be oppressed, for then universal freedom and equality of spirit reigns! — A higher spirit sent from Heaven must found this religion, it will be the last, greatest work of mankind.²⁷

Such reflections represent the culmination of the European Enlightenment, but we do not really appreciate what Hegel is saying until we learn that he had pointed out Napoleon as "the world-spirit, or divine idea, on horseback" (*der Weltgeist zu Pferd*). What Hegel is laying the practical groundplan for is the new religion of the State.²⁸ By 1850, however, his idealism had been "stood on its head" by the materialism of Feuerbach and Marx. In this new development Hegel's Grand Plan of grounding the State in an over-arching myth uniting all segments of society still remained intact. It simply developed in two divergent directions: in the *world* socialism of Marxism and in the *national* socialism of such men as Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco. The Soviet development of Marxism is so well-known that we need not delay on it. The more pertinent problem, however, is to understand how Germany, probably the most academically advanced country in Europe, fell under the sway of such ideas and served the inhumane aspirations of Nazism. This case-study in socio-political myth-making intends — by way of contrast — to bring out some of the practical complexities in implementing the global, pastoral program formulated by Vatican II.

Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazi philosopher

The best known ideologist of the Nazi party was Alfred Rosenberg, and he was the intellectual end-product of the Post-Kantian era. His

most important book, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*,²⁹ weaves together the various strands of modern thought which establish the pattern of Nazi ideology. This book offers the most comprehensive treatment of the Party's philosophical foundations, and once its assumptions are accepted, it provides as systematic and convincing a treatment of Nazi ideology as can be found anywhere. But, as Thomas P. Neill has written: ". . . it is a work that Germans must accept blindly on faith. They are indeed supposed to *feel* its truth rather than understand it. It presents them with a new world history, a metaphysics, a political philosophy, a theology and a religion. All of this is served up by adroitly mixing a muddled mysticism and a pseudo-scientism."³⁰

The first thing that should be noticed about Rosenberg's *Myth* is that it is a fabrication of an *oppressed minority* trying to find its place in the sun by galvanizing the people into action. After the Treaty of Versailles Germany, once so powerful, had been reduced to a marginal existence in Europe. Within this oppressed nation the Nazis themselves during the '20s and early '30s were fighting not merely for a leadership position but for their very lives. Hence the need to have some great myth or vision in order to inspire people to follow them for the gruelling tasks ahead. This type of thinking, even today, is characteristic of most minority groups, real or imagined, which are seeking to achieve socio-political objectives. Hence, the myths in any society are useful diagnostic tools for studying the *emotional* currents surfacing in a given area and the *post-factum* rationalizations so often used to give these emotional trends concrete, socio-political focus. Given the somewhat ineffectual achievements of the Church in the socio-political history of Europe in the last century and a half—in spite of such creative thinkers as Bishop von Ketteler and Adam Möhler, we need not be surprised that the European bishops and theologians at Vatican II were at least indirectly influenced by the movements under discussion in this portion of our paper.

The historical antecedents of Rosenberg's Myth

It would be a serious mistake to dismiss Rosenberg's *Myth* simply because it is frankly irrational and disregards plain facts in its rewriting of history. Its very strength lies in its ability to work within the framework of ideas long accepted by the German intelligentsia. As Thomas P. Neill writes:

The dialectical interpretation of history is stressed in one way or another by Hegel, Marx, Spengler and many others. Rosenberg had only to substitute races for either states or classes as the ultimate units struggling through history. Racism itself had been popularized in Germany by Houston Stewart Chamberlain, by Richard Wagner and Paul de Lagarde. The whole romantic school of political philosophers and literary figures from Immanuel Kant down to Thomas Mann stressed subjectivism and an irrationalism of one shading or another. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche had glorified voluntarism as against intellectualism, and many lesser figures had taken up the chant. The dynamic originality of German culture, as opposed to the sterility of the West, had been stressed by Fichte, Ranke, Lagarde, Chamberlain, Mann, Spengler, Moeller van den Bruck and many others. These same writers had almost all exalted the heroic leader ever since Hegel had pointed out Napoleon as "the divine idea on horseback." The all-powerful state had been advocated particularly by Hegel, Treitsche, and Bernhardi, all of whom glorified war as a necessary means for evoking all that is good and holy and noble in a people. And through almost all of these writers ran the ever stronger current of nationalism loosed by the Napoleonic armies as they coursed through the Germanies, made strong by poets like Arndt and dramatists like Goethe, cultivated by statesmen like Stein and Hardenberg, preached by university men like Treitsche and Haushofer.³¹

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It is most important to realize that by Rosenberg's day most German intellectuals no longer hoped to achieve anything like philosophical truth. They were, however, interested in a functional *weltanschauung* ("worldview") which would orient them to the practical tasks of life and a sense of personal achievement. Rosenberg met this need, but in a somewhat Wagnerian manner. On the other hand, someone like Bertrand Russell with the same materialistic and relativistic mindset as Rosenberg could equally well orchestrate a program of total pacifism if it served his purposes. Since this sort of intellectual rel-

ativism cut across national boundaries, it is no surprise that Rosenberg reached beyond German writers to buttress his arguments. Among such were: Rousseau, whom Kant had called "the Newton of the moral world;" Herbert Spencer, Walter Bagehot and Ludwig Gumplowitz who had stressed the struggle-theme in history and the survival of the fittest; Sorel, Bergson, Pareto, and James who had stressed either some variety of irrationalism or pragmatism. The list of foreign sources could be extended, but this sampling is enough to inform us that the intellectual environment has not significantly changed from the era of Rosenberg.³²

The construction, meaning and intent of the Nazi myth

While I have been emphasizing the somewhat amorphous intellectual environment of Rosenberg's era, that is really not my primary point. For socio-political purposes the really salient point is the *emotional* trauma which the nation suffered from the Treaty of Versailles and the economic and political tumult of postwar Germany. In order to write his *Myth of the Twentieth Century* Rosenberg had to do at least two things well. First, he had to diagnose the emotional trauma of the nation accurately so that he could capitalise on its main currents and aspirations. Secondly, he had to create an easily understood panacea which would promise to heal this emotional trauma and restore the nation to vigorous health. For this he needed a new synthesis of long-familiar ideas and working assumptions which had become "truisms" in German culture. This synthesis had to reflect and give direction to the pent-up emotions of the whole people. Once he had achieved this, Rosenberg could step forward with his solution to *the problem of the century*: i.e., "to create a new belief in life and a new type of humanity." A desperate people ready for *action* reacted with enthusiasm to the new rhetoric.

As we come to reflect on the *meaning* of myth in Rosenberg's *The Myth of the Twentieth Century*, it may be best to return to Thomas P. Neill's acute analysis of this term in order to achieve accuracy of understanding. His analysis of the emotional texture of myths implies we are here opening the door to the subconscious:

"Mythus" has no connotation of fairy tale or legend, as "myth" has in the American language. Rosenberg never uses *Saga* or *Märchen* as synonyms,

but always *Glaube*, which indicates a belief less moving and less powerful than *Mythus*. The term, indeed, is used in its pure Sorelian sense. For both Fascists and Nazis have taken over intact from the French syndicalist the concept of "myth" which he introduced to the world of political speculation in his *Introduction à l'économie moderne* and refined in his *Reflections on Violence*. Here Sorel insists that "intellectualist philosophy is entirely unable to explain the great movements of history." For these great movements—like Christianity, the Protestant Reformation, the French Revolution, and Marxism—were all caused by beliefs more emotional than rational, beliefs which moved men to heroic but unreasoning sacrifice. By means of myth, however, "it is possible to understand the activity, the feelings, and the ideas of the masses preparing themselves to enter upon a decisive struggle; the myths are not descriptions of things, but a determination to act."

The myth on which any great movement depends, therefore, need have no connection with objective reality. It may be true or it may be false; most often it is a subtle combination of truth and error. But it must be "a body of images capable of evoking instinctively all the sentiments . . . the noblest, deepest and most moving sentiments that [the people] possess." The most effective element of the myth, Sorel insisted, is its irrefutability, for it is taken on faith and is therefore "identical with the convictions of a group." The myth, then, is a religion, a set of beliefs which are accepted in their entirety and cannot be refuted by rational criticism. They can, of course, grow cold and lifeless, like any religion, and perhaps be replaced by another myth. But till that faith dies the myth stands whole and strong and propels the faithful to action.³³

Here I must candidly admit that there seems to be a continuous spectrum of interpretive methodology ranging from modern psychoanalysis (Freud and Jung), Rosenberg's myth-making, Marx's notion of praxis and alienation, even through to the type of hermeneutics developed by Vatican II. The common denominator among all four methodologies (although it is not always recognized) is the focus on human *experience*. All four approaches also have the common goal of providing a "therapy" in order to remedy human suffering or to produce a "new man."³⁴ What is distinctive about Rosenberg's goal, however, is the total subordination of men to the collective concept of race. In this way he achieves social control of the people for the further, ultimate purpose of social engineering. He writes: "Religion, the state, politics, economics, art are not standards in themselves, but means for securing the race and nationality . . . It is said that the

body belongs to the state and the soul to the church or God. This is no longer the case. The whole man belongs body and soul to the German nation and to the German state, which has also taken matters of faith under its own control."³⁵ Such a myth, it must be emphasized, was embraced by one of the most academically advanced nations in the world. Modern educational attainments are no real protection against the potential madness of any myth, secular or religious, intent on shaping a *people* in the profound way which we have been talking about.

The Marxist connection

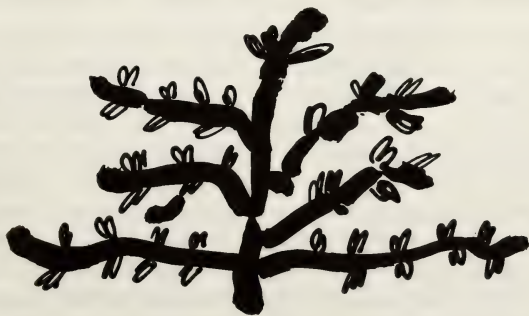
Although it is not realized in any widespread way, Rosenberg's myth and Marxism are simply two facets of the modern problem of absolute materialism deriving from the nineteenth century. Both movements are rabid reactions to the exaggerated individualism spawned by such thinkers as John Locke, Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham and the tradition of political Liberalism and laissez-faire economics. In their origins both movements derived much of their strength by sharply criticizing the social abuses deriving from such nineteenth-century theories, particularly as their injustices became more manifest in the practice of Capitalism. Both movements further strengthened themselves by recalling neglected Christian traditions and by turning them to their own purposes. This is especially true of the notion of "community," which was eventually distorted into a smothering social embrace.³⁶ Both movements identified with and became spokesmen for an oppressed minority or class: for Marx this was the proletariat and for Rosenberg it was the *petit bourgeois*. Once each movement had constructed its myth, or hermeneutics, of the "new man," it could rally the people around a new standard of ideals and demand that each individual sacrifice himself for the group interests. So many men and women were found who joyously sacrificed themselves to these two movements that the utilitarian and behavioristic intellectuals of the affluent West sat back in utter disbelief and amazement.

It is, however, the potential for tragedy in both of these mass movements which should make us pause and reflect about defunct Nazism and its more vigorous counterpart, Marxism, flourishing in the world today. The same potential for tragedy is latent even in any *religious*

movement which aspires to touch men's lives in the profound depths undertaken by both Rosenberg and Marx. If the renewal program of Vatican II seriously hopes to affect the course of a world bent on Apocalypse Now, it cannot shirk this unpalatable responsibility. Yet, any such religious mass movement intent on shaping a *people* must be conscious of the fact that the masses are swayed by deep instinctual emotions which are not easily guided in a constructive way. There are two case-studies today which can serve as a jumping-off point for religious reflection: the two Old Testament types of the People of God on collision-course in the Jews and the Arabs; and the two New Testament types of the People of God on collision-course in Northern Ireland.

The world situation today

With the collapse of Nazism in central Europe one of the main ideological foes of Soviet Marxism vanished. As a result Soviet Marxism, which is really a *global* strategic ideology, was left in a much enhanced situation to promote its cause throughout the world. The destruction of Hiroshima in 1945, however, also signaled a uniquely "new moment" in human history: mankind was now capable of utterly destroying itself. Pope John XXIII tried to alert the Church to the spiritual opportunities inherent in this dire situation when he wrote *Humanae Salutis* and *Pacem in Terris*. Since the end of World War II much of our learning-experience has been growing up to the full real-



ization of the harsh realities of today's world.³⁷ Intellectually speaking, the capitalistic West is not well-equipped to handle such massive human problems: our dominant attitudes are shaped by the "pursuit of happiness" and the behavioristic sciences, even more so than in Rosenberg's day. Until the Second Vatican Council there was no global strategic vision, or "myth," to act as a counterfoil to Soviet Marxism. Unless we appreciate that point, we cannot appreciate the full *moral* challenge which Vatican II's renewal program is imposing on the Church.

In suggesting this iconographic contrast between Soviet Economic Man and the People of God I am not implying that the Council consciously constructed this symmetry-by-way-of-contrast. In the abstract much the same opposition exists in the direction of Capitalistic Economic Man, but its utilitarianism and hedonistic individualism make Capitalism such an improvisational and amorphous entity that it can never serve as the basis for a just and humane world order. Consequently, the total complex of concrete global problems which Vatican II set itself to confront made our comparison with Marxism somewhat inevitable. It was also in the context of global human problems that John XXIII in *Humanae Salutis* made the *temporal* order the crucible in which the efficacy of the supernatural order would be tested. Lastly, when the Council opted for a *methodological idealism* by its utilization of the phenomenological method, this knitted Vatican II into the Post-Kantian intellectual heritage of Europe, which we have focused on in this paper.

Reconsidering the transcendental-pragmatic of Vatican II

If we may now attempt to return to Vatican II by way of "the ground up," we shall realize that our reflections on Rosenberg's use of "myth" has placed the Council's religious "myth" of the People of God in a socio-political context of "blood, sweat, and tears." The transcendental-pragmatic of Vatican II, which I tried to explain in a phenomenologically accurate way, now comes through in its entirety as something very "transcendental" when compared with the down-to-earth "pragmatic" involved in Rosenberg's type of socio-political myth-making. I hardly think even Vonier surmised such depths when he formulated his more practical-minded version of the People of God. Yet, it is the type of myth-making exemplified by Rosenberg and

Marx which the Church must somehow baptize and sanctify if she is to make the religious myth of the People of God a flesh and blood reality in modern social life.

It is the complexities of the above-mentioned problem which today seem to be accounting for a high percentage of the internal difficulties of the institutional Church. In formulating its "new" myth of the People of God Vatican II, as we saw, reasoned "from the top down" by reason of its christocentric focus. In modern European socio-political history, as we now realize, myth-makers like Marx and Rosenberg construct their hermeneutics "from the ground up:" i.e., by identifying with some oppressed "minority group" and adapting "truisms," widely accepted in the culture, to represent and orchestrate these mass movements. The process is essentially an irrational ("charismatic") one, whatever the academic credentials under which it may parade.³⁸ Our awareness here may, possibly, set into perspective that catalogue of "grassroots" religious movements which Harvey Cox recently discerned as harbingers of a postmodern theology.³⁹

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to explain the strategic vision of Vatican II as a transcendental-pragmatic constructed in a phenomenological way. The ecclesial image, or myth, of the People of God is the theme chosen by the Council to exemplify this new modality of religious reflection. The "theory" of this notion of the Church may be found in *Lumen gentium*, but this "theory" finds its horizon, or applied practical sense, in *Gaudium et spes*. In order to achieve its final concrete embodiment, however, the People of God must assume its global responsibilities as the operative Catholic "myth" for human progress and development. Our extended discussion of Rosenberg's use of "myth" was meant to display the modern use, complexities, and dangers of this new type of socio-political involvement.

As I come to an end of these reflections, I must admit to a great deal of mixed emotions in regards to the Second Vatican Council. There is a certain admiration fascinated, even entranced, with the Council's sophisticated style of religious reflection. But then there is the over-powering sense of dismay at the burden of creative pastoral leadership and management which the mission of the modern Church has placed on the shoulders of the faithful. In the light of such reflec-

tions possibly we may all renew our study of Vatican II with the seriousness of purpose which the subject demands.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 See H. F. Hamilton, *The People of God*. 2 vols. Oxford, 1912.
- 2 Y. Congar, "The Church: The People of God," and R. Schnackenburg and J. Dupont, "The Church as the People of God," in E. Schillebeeckx (ed.), *The Church and Mankind*. Concilium series, dogma, vol. 1. Glen Rock, NJ: Paulist Press, 1965. Pp. 11-37 and pp. 117-129 respectively.
- 3 London: Burns, Oates & Washbourne, 1937. The religious, historical background out of which Vonier's thought originated is briefly presented by R. W. Franklin, "Response: Humanism and Transcendence in the Nineteenth Century Liturgical Movement." *Worship* 59:4 (July, 1985) 342-353.
- 4 The text of this apostolic constitution may be found in Walter M. Abbott, SJ (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*. New York: America Press, 1966. Pp. 703-709, but see esp. pg. 706 (bottom) for John XXIII's remarks about "efficiency."
- 5 See R. W. Franklin, "Guéranger: A View on the Centenary of His Death." *Worship* 49 (1975) 318-328. Sonya A. Quitslund, *Beau-duin: A Prophet Vindicated*. New York: Newman Press, 1973.
- 6 See Karl-Otto Apel, "Types of Rationality Today: the Continuum of Reason between Science and Ethics," in Theodore F. Geraets (ed.), *Rationality Today*. Ottawa, Canada: University of Ottawa Press, 1979. Pp. 307-340, but esp. pp. 315 sq.
- 7 On Van Der Leeuw's methodology see Jacques Waardenburg, "Religion Between Reality and Idea: A Century of Phenomenology of Religion in the Netherlands." *Numen* 19 (1971) 161-183. For some further phenomenological implications see James J. Dagenais, "Once More Into the Lion's Mouth: Another Look At Van Der Leeuw's Phenomenology of Religion," in A-T Tymieniecka and C. O. Schrag (ed.), *Foundations of Morality, Human Rights, and The Human Sciences*. Analecta Husserliana, vol. XV. Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1983. Pp. 319-329, but esp. pp. 326-328.

- 8 The "assumptions" are treated at length in John F. Kobler, *Vatican II and Phenomenology: Reflections on the Life-World of the Church*. Dordrecht, Holland: Martinus Nijhoff Pub. Co., 1985.
- 9 There are two reasons to say this. *Intrinsically*, the notion of Church renewal is grounded in the patristic notion of the "restoration of man." See Y. Congar, *op. cit.* (no. 2 *supra*) pg. 24. This point is extensively developed in Gerhart B. Ladner, *The Idea of Reform: Its Impact on Christian Thought and Action in the Age of the Fathers*. Revised edition. New York: Harper & Row, 1959. *Extrinsically*, by reason of the "new moment" of human history in which the very survival of mankind is jeopardized. John XXIII made this point first in *Humanae Salutis* and later in *Pacem in Terris*.
- 10 See Abbott, *op. cit.* (no. 4 *supra*), pg. 707 (top).
- 11 See Y. Congar, *op. cit.* (no. 2 *supra*), pg. 35. This accounts in large part for the centrality of the Mystical Body in Paul VI's first encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam*, issued only four months before Vatican II's *Lumen gentium*.
- 12 In ecclesiology such a view is theoretically possible and warranted only by "the gift of the Spirit" to the Church at Pentecost. See Y. Congar, *op. cit.* (no. 2 *supra*), pg. 35.
- 13 The *pastoral* (i.e., practical), anthropological theology of Vatican II is, of course, a *pastoral*, anthropological Christology developed by the *corporate* ecclesial consciousness of the bishops in council. It must *not* be confused with the *speculative*, anthropological Christologies developed by such theologians as Rahner, Küng and Schillebeeckx whose systematic (theoretical) constructs are in each case the product of an *individual* consciousness. The same may be said for the interpretations offered by Bultmann, Barth, von Balthasar, Gutiérrez, Boff and Metz. For an extended reflection on this topic within a technical, biblical context see Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ, "The Biblical Commission and Christology." *Theological Studies* 46:3 (Sept., 1985) 407-479.
- 14 See Abbott, *op. cit.* (no. 4 *supra*), pg. 705.
- 15 See Abbott, *op. cit.* (no. 4 *supra*), pg. 706 (bottom).
- 16 See Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*. Trans. by David Carr. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970.

- 17 Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction*. Third revised and enlarged edition. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982. Pp. 452-453, emphasis added.
- 18 One may profitably compare this religious conception of the "glance" (*Blick*), which is an interplay of *anamnesis*, contemplation, phenomenological analysis, and connatural knowledge, with that formulated by Sartre. See Spiegelberg, *op. cit.* (no. 17 *supra*), pp. 523-524.
- 19 In such a discernment process it is the christocentric paradigm which determines what the Church *can* see. Consequently, at each new level of consciousness only those human dynamisms which have an obediential potency to be conformed to Christ, as the New Adam, can have any *meaning for her*.
- 20 Paul VI, "The Last General Meeting." *Catholic Mind* 64:1202 (April, 1966) 61.
- 21 These complexities are discussed at much greater length in J. F. Kobler, *op. cit.* (no. 8 *supra*), chapters 8-10.
- 22 For example, see Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959. Eliade's methodology is extensively treated in Douglas Allen, *Structure and Creativity in Religion: Hermeneutics in Mircea Eliade's Phenomenology and new directions*. The Hague: Mouton, 1978. A variant of this style of reflection would be: Henry Duméry, *Phenomenology and Religion: Structures of the Christian Institution*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975.
- 23 See M. Eliade, "Comparative Religion: Its Past and Future," in W. J. Ong, SJ (ed.), *Knowledge and the Future of Man: An International Symposium*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968, pg. 251. For the esthetic dimension of Vatican II see J. F. Kobler, *op. cit.* (no. 8 *supra*), esp. chapter 8.
- 24 See D. Allen, *op. cit.* (no. 22 *supra*), pg. 13.
- 25 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.
- 26 This is an allusion to the important formative influence which discussions on the liturgy had on shaping the mature method of Vatican II. *Sacrosanctum concilium* is, however, outside of, or at most propaedeutic to, the mature methodology of the Council. Consequently, its integral sense is perceived only when read within the

- context of the three constitutions which are the focus of this article. See J. F. Kobler, *op. cit.* (no. 8 *supra*), pp. 41-44, 212-213.
- 27 H. S. Harris, "Religion as the Mythology of Reason." *Thought* 56:222 (Sept., 1981) 301. For the centrality of Hegel in Marxism, existentialism and pragmatism see Richard J. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action: Contemporary Philosophies of Human Activity*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971.
 - 28 S. Kierkegaard was one of the first philosophers to perceive in Hegelianism a tendency "to streamline individual thought and action into fixed mass patterns." See John Wild, *The Challenge of Existentialism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966. Pp. 43-44.
 - 29 See Alfred Rosenberg, *The Myth of the Twentieth Century: An Evaluation of The Spiritual-Intellectual Confrontation of Our Age*. Torrance, CA: The Noontide Press, 1982.
 - 30 Thomas P. Neill, "Alfred Rosenberg—Nazi Ideologist," in Frank Sullivan (ed.), *Key Thinkers and Modern Thought*. St. Louis University Studies in Honor of St. Thomas Aquinas, vol. 2, 1944. St. Louis: St. Louis University, 1944. Pg. 40.
 - 31 T. P. Neill, *op. cit.* (no. 30 *supra*), pp. 40-41.
 - 32 An acute analysis of our contemporary intellectual situation may be found in Richard J. Bernstein, *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983.
 - 33 T. P. Neill, *op. cit.* (no. 30 *supra*), pg. 42. See also Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*. Authorized translation by T. E. Hulme. New York: B. W. Huebsch, 1914.
 - 34 An American psycho-social model of the "new man" appeared in 1941 when Edward Chace Tolman's article, "Psychological Man," appeared in the February issue of *The Journal of Social Psychology*. See E. C. Tolman, *Behavior and Psychological Man*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1958. Pp. 207-218. As might be expected, Psychological Man is the academic model for socially constructive hedonism. The consequences of this mindset have been perceptively analysed with a view to the renewal of American society in Robert N. Bellah *et al.*, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

- 35 T. P. Neill, *op. cit.* (no. 30 *supra*), pg. 47.
- 36 Glen Tinder, *Community: Reflections on a Tragic Ideal*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1980.
- 37 For the world-situation today see Georgie Anne Geyer, "Our Disintegrating World: The Menace of Global Anarchy." *1985 Britannica Book of the Year*. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc., 1985. Pp. 11-25.
- 38 On the affective continuum between the irrational, charismatic, and sacred in the sociological thought of Durkheim and Weber, see Tom Bottomore and Robert Nisbet (ed.), *A History of Sociological Analysis*. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1978. Pp. 220, 394-395.
- 39 See Harvey Cox, *Religion in the Secular City: Towards a Postmodern Theology*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985.



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“Province Ministries: Courage and Creativity”¹

Introduction

During the Easter Season we celebrate “new life” in Christ Jesus. The Lenten and Paschal cycles bring to our memories the events in the life of Jesus and in the life of the Church that we experience within ourselves and within the cycles of nature. Winter must give way to spring; life gives way to death—and then, to new life.

The beauty of springtime offers me an occasion to reflect with you on our ministries and what we intend to do for the future. The planning process that we and many other provinces of the Congregation are involved in can be likened to a kind of “planting of the seeds,” as it were, so that the harvest will eventually feed and nourish a future Church, a changing world and another generation of Passionists.

Continuing the above imagery, I would say that two ingredients that are necessary in the “soil” are hope and courage. Our bishops have put it well: “Let us have the courage to believe in the bright future and in a God who wills it for us—not a perfect world but a better one. Human hands and hearts and minds can create this better world.”² We, too, should have the same concern in what we are about now as Passionists. Let us plant even though we may never see the fruits. For, we must live by the love of what we will never see. What we do now—prayerfully and courageously—may well be the seed of our highest hope.³

What I am about to develop in this paper is a personal reflection based on what I am reading and what I am experiencing within our

own community as well as what I see in other communities. I begin in Part I by offering some ideas on *transitions* and then treat the important areas of *mission* and ministries. In Part II I will make some reflections regarding our *present ministries* and some proposals for new ones. These are based, however, on various *assumptions* and *theological directions* that will also be presented.

Part I: The Environment of our Ministries and our Mission in the Church

1. *The Environment of "Transitions"*

It is important that what we do (our ministries) energize our communities and our very selves. It is the unique gift of our times to witness the unleashing of many ministries within the Church and to see how the laity have accepted their share of these new responsibilities. Much of this energy comes from Vatican II, much from the evolving and changing culture around us and still much more, from the growing apostolic spirituality that deepens our concern for the world and its peoples. The mission of the Congregation (which I will treat later) is still very valid today; therefore, our particular charism, spirituality and historical development continue to focus our energies around the Passion of Jesus.

I have already referred to the exhilarating and complex nature of our changing culture today, as well as the contemplative spirit that is necessary to deal with this transitional period of history.⁴ I am also aware of the many discouraging factors that are present in our life. Cultural transitions, as well as personal life transitions, can turn us in



upon ourselves. We are, quite naturally, preoccupied with self. Such attitudes and life styles are reflected in the literature⁵ that we read and the television that we watch.

Transitions are also taking place within the intrinsic life of religious communities themselves. Recent historical studies⁶ have documented not only the great ages of religious life (Age of the Desert to Monasticism to Mendicant Orders to Apostolic and then Teaching Congregations) but also the life cycles of each community (Foundation period to Expansion to Stabilization and to Transition which includes a Breakdown and Critical Period). Much of what is described as taking place during this historical Transition period (personnel placement, ambiguity in community decision and communication processes, needs of persons vs. institutional commitments, leadership and followership) strikes a familiar note within our hearts.

Another factor is the fear of the aging process, both within ourselves and within the community as a whole (not to mention this factor within American society itself). This, of course, is a transition that is very deep and personal. I think that it can result in an unhealthy fixation on retirement. I do not mean the concern that we should all have for our elderly or sick and infirm religious. What I do mean has been frequently quoted from Sr. Joan Chichester: "Communities preoccupied with retirement are dead." Now this is often an attitude rather than a physical fact. Such an attitude is manifested by sadness, tiredness, lack of enthusiasm, rejection of any change or new endeavors and finally, by a kind of "burn-out." These symptoms are more detrimental to growth than the physical process of aging in itself. In a letter to the editor of the magazine *Human Development*, the writer quoted Dr. H. Rome, a psychiatrist at the Mayo Graduate School of Medicine: burnout is described as a "progressive loss of idealism, energy and purpose which affects people in helping professions as a result of the conditions of their work . . . the disenchanting or disillusioning type of experiences that underlie burnout are always related to change—to growing old. A person grows "old" in a tedious job, in an unsatisfying marriage, in a stereotyped occupation, in an unstimulating retirement, in unbelievable physical incapacitation." The writer concluded by asking *Human Development*, "Please go on helping us to approach our lives and our work with attitudes and knowledge that will keep us from growing 'old' too soon."⁷

There are, nonetheless, other forces at work within our changing and transitional culture, church and community and ourselves. Deep within the good earth of our collective lives are the seeds of birth and generation. The signs of spring are already present, even though the fruits are not completely known and the process is still difficult. We speak of *renewal*, *regeneration*, *redimensioning*, *reinhabiting*, *redeveloping*, *revitalizing*, *recycling* and so forth. The prefix "re" has become part of our future language as we attempt to link the past, our memory, with the future, our hope. Before that transformation can be achieved, however, we can still feel the stretching and the tension within ourselves. We can see efforts from a past age to keep things "in place." Perhaps it is this conflict, however necessary, that prompted Karl Rahner, before his death in 1984, to wonder about Catholicism heading "into a wintry climate, on a journey that is gloomy, depressing and aimed at restoration." Even in this vision, winter gives way to spring and restoration, if it goes back far enough, may reveal an ancient beauty far superior to the immediate past.

In spite of transitional times, there are still many energies within us and within the corporate body. Maybe, because of this transition, there are new energies waiting to come forth—waiting for our courage and creativity. We are all responsible for that future and what we intend to do. More and more people are becoming concerned for the earth's future and thus taking responsible positions on matters of conservation and ecology. We can do no less for ourselves and the work that has been entrusted to us. David Tracy describes this thinking when he writes: "This phenomenon (shift in western thinking) can be described as man's realization that individually he is responsible for the life he leads, and collectively he is responsible for the world in which he leads it."⁸

2. *Our Mission in the Church*

Our new Constitutions articulates our mission in the Church in Chapter One: "The Church, recognizing in St. Paul of the Cross the action of the Holy Spirit, approved with supreme authority our Congregation and its Rule, for the mission of announcing, by our life and apostolate, the Gospel of the Passion. (2)

Although this statement may be very brief, it does receive greater elaboration in subsequent paragraphs. There, the charism and spirit

of St. Paul of the Cross are described as well as our rich heritage. The planning at the General Chapter and at the 1984 Synod sought to focus our mission on the living and dynamic memory of the Passion, especially as it is found in the crucified of today's world.

If we were to bring many of these elements together (and this is not my task), we would have a "mission statement" in the technical sense. Bringing elements to it from our own Province reflection and U.S. culture would particularize the statement for our Province. Much is being written about mission statements and many communities are writing them since it helps to focus the community into the future. Once it is in place, it would allow a Chapter, for example, to address those issues that move the Province toward the accomplishment of its mission.

A mission statement, then, is defined as "a succinct public statement that sets forth the unique contribution that the group is striving to deliver. It centers the group in the richness of its past and gives meaning to that history by saying: 'Here is where we are going with what has been given to us.' " From the above statement, we can identify seven elements: 1) statement of the reason the group exists; 2) some reference to the group's roots; 3) identification of the distinctive features of the group; 4) description of the qualities of the service that the group is committed to offer; 5) a focus on the future direction the group has chosen; 6) identification of those the group has chosen to work with or to serve and 7) the use of key words that carry a particular wealth of meaning of the group.¹⁰

In light of the above descriptions, I think you will find the rereading of our *Provincial Legislation* (1982), pp. 1-7 and the *Province Pastoral Plan* (1984) pp. 5-10 an enlightening experience. The convergence of major concerns among U.S. religious is amazing and we trust that our mission as Passionists and the ministries we undertake will well serve the Church and society of the U.S. as well as in other countries.

3. *Ministries*

Our ministries, then, are the activities that we undertake in the name of the Congregation. Ministry is not a statement but an action; however, the mission statement does serve to shape and form what we do while being open to adaptations that are necessary and hopefully, to a creativity that is life-giving.

We are experiencing in these days an outpouring of the Spirit and the development of many ministries. This has brought a certain amount of misunderstanding and conflict which results on one hand in a narrowing of the concept of ministry and on the other hand, in a broadening of the same. Thomas O'Meara in the *Theology of Ministry* argues for a broad approach, but quite rightly reminds us that when everything is ministry, nothing is ministry.¹¹ Thus he offers six characteristics: 1) doing something 2) for the advent of the kingdom 3) in public 4) on behalf of a Christian community 5) which is a gift received in faith, baptism and ordination and which is 6) an activity with its own limits and identity within a diversity of ministerial actions.¹² After commenting on these elements, he pulls them together in the following definition: "Christian ministry is the public activity of a baptized follower of Jesus Christ flowing from the Spirit's charism and an individual personality on behalf of a Christian community to witness to, serve and realize the kingdom of God."¹³

In reflecting on our Passionist ministry, could we adapt the above definition in this way: Passionist ministry is the public activity of a baptized follower of Jesus Christ and a vowed or professed member of the Congregation flowing from the Spirit's charism, the charism of St. Paul of the Cross and an individual personality on behalf of a Passionist community to witness to, serve and realize the Kingdom of God. I believe that this definition gives some proper limitations to our ministry while, at the same time, it fosters an activity based on the theological and spiritual understanding of the *memoria passionis*.

4. *Passionist Ministries*

Having presented some general thoughts on mission and ministry, it would be good to clarify and classify our present Province minis-

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tries. I accept the difficulty of the task because of history, tradition, emerging trends and use of terminology. Nevertheless, for the sake of completion and as a basis for further discussion, I present the following outline and exploration (see also the chart in *Appendix A*).

The two basic categories I will treat are *Corporate* and *Individual Ministries*. I recognize and affirm our overseas commitments and Vicariates but I see them as having, more or less, the same breakdown as the Mother Province.

1. *Corporate Ministries*: These are ministries that flow from the charism of the Congregation, have been approved by the Province and have an historical (roots) tradition with us. Some new ones are and will be developing, particularly in light of the consensus among religious communities for a commitment to the poor and our own emphasis on the "crucified." These ministries fulfill the criteria of Passionist ministry as noted in our *Regulations*, numbers 28 and 32.¹⁴ Corporate ministries are further classified as *administrative*, those that serve *local church/area* and those serving the *wider church/area*.

a) *Administrative*: these corporate ministries embrace the services that minister to the well-being of the community, such as vocation and formation development, leadership, maintenance and cooking, fundraising, etc.

b) *Corporate and at the service of the local Church/area*: These ministries, for the most part, serve the local Church, diocese or area. They embrace our parishes, retreat houses and those services we offer in our houses, such as spiritual direction, confessions, counseling, popular devotions, etc.¹⁵

c) *Corporate and serving the wider Church/area*: These ministries go beyond the local Church and bring the Word of the Cross to a wider group through various media. These are the home missionaries, Radio & TV, Riverdale Research Center, Stauros and Social Concerns.

2. *Individual Ministries*: Although our Province legislation (numbers 8 & 9) uses the term particularized ministry, I prefer the term individual. I believe this indicates that these ministries are undertaken by individuals and although they are approved by Provincial authority (thus, true Passionist ministries), they do not have a corporate thrust or backing. They usually lack some of the criteria for Passionist ministry, especially that of community. However, some have had a basis in our history (Creedmore and St. Agnes chaplaincies, as well as military chaplains) and others may be on the cutting edge of new corporate ventures. At present, there is no Province commitment to these ministries.

The reasons why individuals are allowed to undertake such ministries are: 1) for apostolic and Church reasons, i.e., a call from some element in the Church for true apostolic assistance; 2) for apostolic and personal reasons, i.e., a person may feel that this is the best use of his gifts at this time or for personal reasons and in a true apostolic setting; 3) for personal and community reasons, i.e., while granting that apostolic service is rendered, it is best for the individual and the community that he be at this particular place.

Examples of such ministries are teachers, chaplains, parochial assistance, special administrative functions, etc.

Part II: Assumptions and Theological/Cultural Directions regarding our Ministries; Proposals for our Ministries

1. Some Assumptions and Theological/Cultural Directions re our Ministries

In this second section, I begin by offering some basic assumptions about our life and our ministries. I realize that some of these may be controversial and others are still in process. If, however, they have some degree of credibility, then we can re-evaluate our present ministries, be creative in redefining our approach to what we are doing and move ahead into some new ministries.

1. Ministerial assumptions or attitudes about our life:

a) The question about monastic life vs. apostolic life is settled. . . . Although it is settled in our literature, we still use the rhetoric of monastery, monk, etc. We were never in a monastic category but we did use the "observance and customs" of monastic life, as did many religious congregations. We are only beginning to develop a true apostolic spirituality and coming to understand the meaning of apostolic life.

b) Our enclosed, cloistered life is over. . . . This has nothing to do with privacy or our spirit of solitude. It does have everything to do with being inserted in the neighborhood where we live and being part of the local, developing environment. This refers more to an attitude and an interest rather than the way we structure our houses, although this is indicative also.

c) There is no need to staff large houses. . . . This refers to an attitude of filling our "monasteries" with personnel for so-called monastic activities. Rather, we must look at creative use of the available space

in our places: for our personnel needs, for ministerial programs, for civic and humanitarian needs. It also refers to an excessive amount of property that goes beyond the demand of solitude and privacy as well as environmental needs and uses.

d) Some of our religious find themselves outdated and fearful or their abilities underused. . . . This speaks to the need for continuing education, ministry evaluation and the willingness to be responsible for one's personal life—a wholistic approach to health, work and community.

e) All ministries need to be properly accommodated to the life situations of today and address the realities around us. . . . While we affirm what we are already doing, there is a constant demand to assess the environment of our ministries. We can do this by our own commissions but also by the creative use of other boards composed of laity and other religious people. This will serve to raise our consciousness of the environment in which we work and serve.

f) Creativity and the courage to act are elements in our ministries that can be fostered and utilized. . . . Creativity belongs to every person. We can all go beyond the routine and limits of our daily life, beyond the boundaries of what we are now doing. "Creativity occurs in an act of encounter."¹⁶ These days bring us into all kinds of encounters and no matter how brief or intense the encounter, for the sensitive person—for one with a passion for life, we have the climate for creativity. Some of the most creative moments in history have come out of chaos, whether it be a condition that is spiritual or psychological, physical or global or a combination of all. Rollo May reminds us: "Creative people, as I see them, are distinguished by the fact that they can live with anxiety, even though a high price may be paid in terms of insecurity, sensitivity and defenselessness. . . . They knock in silence for an answering music; they pursue meaninglessness until they can force it to mean."¹⁷

g) Our present formation programs (at every level) are already inserted into the needs of the neighborhood as well as operating in a collaborative mode with other groups of men and women. . . . Our future will be shaped by the events that are developing around us and by the personnel of the future. Our religious then will be functioning in the above mode and we must be prepared to receive them into this way of acting and be open to the demands this makes on personal life and community.

h) "Option for the poor" is no longer optional. . . . What St. Paul of the Cross did for the poor and his insight into the crucified of his day (which has been preserved in our own spirituality focusing on the memory of the passion) is now making new demands on our approach to ministry and the people we serve. "Preference for the poor" is the better wording of the now classic statement which all religious institutes are trying to incarnate into their ministries. The "crucified" are shaping our response to ministry today.

2. *Proposals re our Present Ministries and Some New Developments*

In this section I began by affirming those traditional ministries which our Province has engaged in for a number of years and which have been carried out quite well. What we do *now*, can be done in the *future*. Our retreat houses, parishes, preaching ministry, radio and TV, as well as many other ministries, provide a relevant service to the Church and people of the U.S. and our Province commitment to other countries continues to grow in various ways. Into these ministries must continue to flow the Passionist charism as *experienced today* and according to the directions of the Church. I would also submit that the previous stated assumptions and theological/cultural directions will impact on these ministries.

Thus, I offer the following developments in our ministries:

1. *Re Overseas Commitments:* (Cf. 2nd Target of 1984 Synod in Africa)

a) *Jamaica, West Indies:* We should continue to revitalize that area of our Province with qualified people in the area of formation, lay development and the preaching ministry:

- i. — by exploring with those already in Jamaica about a greater extension of our presence in the Caribbean.
- ii. — by inviting other Provinces to collaborate with us in the Caribbean (the Antilles Conference is now bilingual — French and English);
- iii. — by revitalizing, with the Jamaican Vicariate, a program of lay volunteers for that country;
- iv. — ascertaining whether a program of short term assistance from the mother province, especially in the retreat ministry, would be beneficial for both Province and Vicariate.

b) We should continue *Inter-Province* collaboration and assistance to other organizations in foreign countries. (E.g. Our presence already in Africa, Mexico and Central America and the *Bahamas*.)

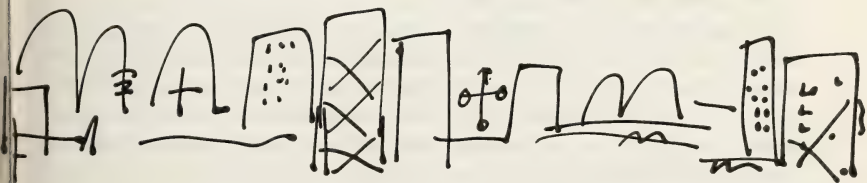
c) We should support the Canadian Vicariate's outreach in two areas:

- i. — bonding with laity in their ministries and possible affiliation with the community;
- ii. — promoting of the thinking of Thomas Berry through publications, seminars and conferences as well as his approach to creation in their retreats and other apostolates.

2. *Re Ministries in the Mother Province:*

a) In dialogue with local Bishops we will determine how our larger communities can more suitably develop a greater involvement in local church or local area:

- i. — by the availability of religious to *staff surrounding parishes* from our own houses. (This idea has already been put forth by the CMSM as the religious contribution to the personnel question.¹⁸ It also brings individualized parish ministry personnel back to a central community.)
- ii. — by offering chaplains to health care facilities could be offered from our houses.



b) The retreat house ministry will be examined in order to understand the present personnel shortage and apparent malaise in administration and programming. Collaboration with the laity and other religious will be continued, for this ministry seems to respond to a felt need in the church and society today.

c) Our preaching ministry in both itinerant work and in radio/TV will continue to be affirmed and promoted.

d) Our houses and institutional ministries should examine their availability to the present needs of the poor, needy and homeless. (1987 is the Year of the Homeless and *Stauros* hopes to develop a program during that year.

e) *Volunteerism* can be developed not only within our ministries but also towards others. Thus, in dialogue with local civic agencies, our personnel and facilities can assist in helping local programs, e.g. teaching English to new immigrants, assistance to the elderly, etc.

f) We could develop one new parish/preaching center (small community) and test this throughout the Province. (Our present legislation, *P.L.* No. 12, would allow for this.)

g) The West Virginia experience needs to be validated as a corporate venture or individualized ministries. This may have a relationship to "f" above.

h) We need to *re-evaluate* Atlanta and our commitment to that area of the country. We must examine ideas such as mission, presence, school/educational apostolate, parish, etc.

i) Our *individualized* presence in the Diocese of Venice, Florida will be studied. The demands of the poor and the migrants in that area are outstanding. Again, this may have a relationship to "f" above.

j) We must continue to develop and affirm our vocational department and its important work. Each religious, too, should be conscious of this need and make a personal effort in his life and *ministry* to invite others to "come and see."

k) Lastly and most *importantly*, in all our ministries we will reflect and act on our "preference (option) for the poor." All our present and future ministries offer a place for this commitment today. This "preference" is well articulated in our Constitutions and Synod planning. *Stauros* can assist us in making this commitment practical and the "crucified" themselves will reveal their place and their needs in the ongoing memory of Christ's Passion.

The office of *Social Concerns* has and will continue to translate this "preference" into practical programs. This office and *Stauros* may well collaborate together and even merge for a stronger focus.

Conclusion

If you have arrived at this conclusion, I thank you for your patience. I repeat that this is a position paper and is meant to serve as a

point of departure for discussion and reaction. I thank those who were kind enough to review this paper, offer suggestions and clarify incomplete ideas. I am particularly indebted to my community at South River.

I have journeyed with this paper through the seasons of winter and spring, as well as the liturgical cycles of Ordinary Time, Lent and Easter. I trust this imagery has been reflected not only in the text but in my orientation towards a hope-filled future. And because we treasure our dreams, we have the courage to face the unknown relying on the creative spirit within each one of us and the re-creative force of the Holy Spirit.

I conclude on this feast of Pentecost commending ourselves to the loving care of the Spirit of God. May the warmth of the Spirit's love and energy bring forth new life within ourselves just as the beauty and heat of summer bring the seeds of winter to a fruit-bearing completion.

I will let the poetry of Jessica Powers bring these reflections to a conclusion. In her poem, *Come, South Wind*,¹⁹ she begins by quoting St. John of the Cross: "By south wind is meant the Holy Spirit who awakens love."

Over and over I say to the south wind: come,
waken in me and warm me!
I have walked too long with a death's chill in the air,
mourned over trees too long with branches bare.
Ice has a falsity for all its brightness
and so has need of your warm reprimand.
A curse be on the snow that lapsed from whiteness,
and all bleak days that paralyze my land.

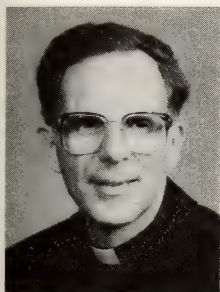
I am saying all day to Love who wakens love:
rise in the south and come!
Hurry me into springtime; hustle the winter
out of my sight; make dumb
the north wind's loud impertinence. Then plunge me
into my leafing and my blossoming,
and give me pasture, sweet and sudden pasture.
Where could the Shepherd bring
his flocks to graze? Where could they rest at noonday?

O south wind, listen to the woe I sing!
One whom I love is asking for the summer
from me, who still am distances from spring.

FOOTNOTES

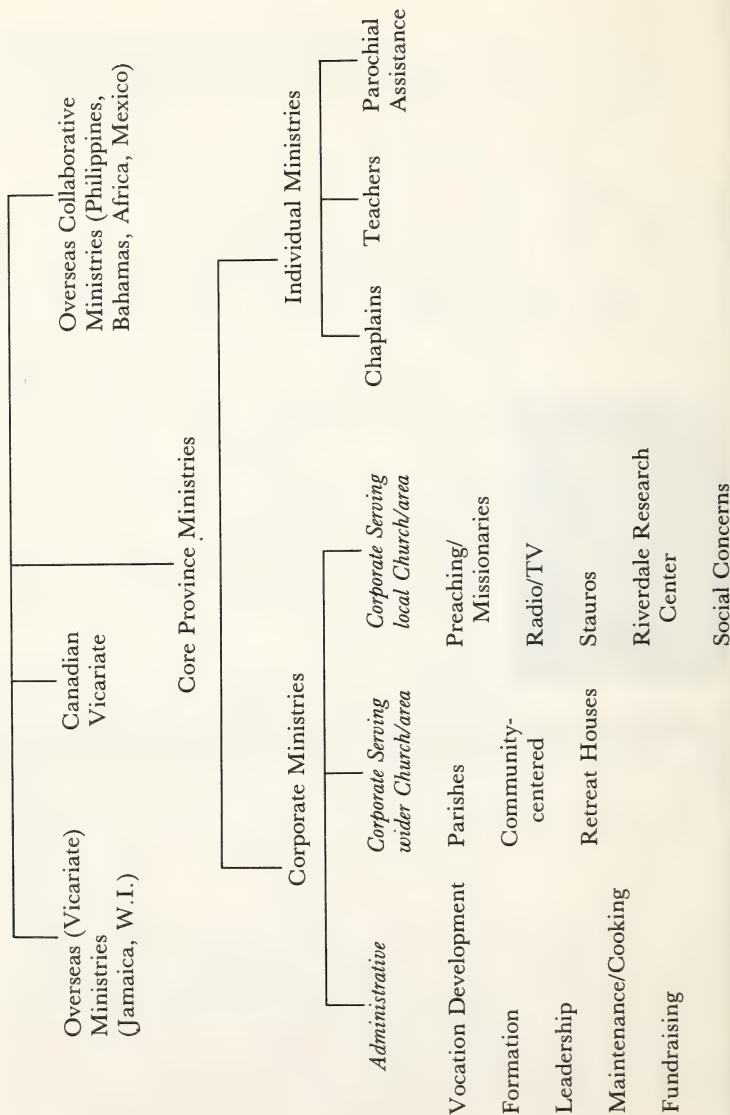
- 1 Cf. Rollo May, *The Courage to Create*. Norton, N.Y., 1975.
- 2 *The Challenge of Peace*. U.S. Bishops' Pastoral, par. 337.
- 3 Adapted from Ruben Alves, *Tomorrow's Child*.
- 4 Paper on "Culture & Contemplation: Elements of Planning," Lent, 1985.
- 5 See, for example, Christopher Lesch, *The Culture of Narcissism* and more recently, *The Minimal Self*.
- 6 Excellent book on Transitions, life cycles and historical development of religious life is *Shaping the Coming Age of Religious Life* by Coda, Fitz, etc. Crossroad, N.Y., 1979.
See also the classic and monumental work, *The Life and Death of Religious Orders* (A psycho-sociological approach) by R. Hostie. Trans. from the French (1972) by CARA, Washington, DC, 1983.
- 7 *Human Development*, Spring (Vol. 6, No. 1), 1985, p. 5.
- 8 *The Achievement of Bernard Lonergan*. Cf. Chapter 6.
- 9 Jean Alvarez, "Focusing a Congregation's Future," *Human Development*. Winter (Vol. 5, No. 4), 1984, p. 29.
- 10 Ibid., p. 29.
- 11 Thomas F. O'Meara, O.P., *Theology of Ministry*. Paulist, N.Y., 1983, p. 134.
- 12 Ibid., p. 136.
- 13 Ibid., p. 142.
- 14 These are the paragraphs from the new edition. In our present English edition, they are paragraphs 31 and 34. The same criteria are to be found in the *Province Pastoral Plan* (1st. Ed.), No. 5.21.
- 15 Some use the term "Institutional" in referring to ministries connected with our own buildings or institutions. Although the present terminology has an institutional flavor to it, the difference is developed along the lines of geography and outreach.

- 16 May, *ibid.*, p. 76. See also the unique ideas of M. Csikozentmihaly, *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety*, (The Experience of Play in Work and Games), San Francisco, 1975. Herein the author develops the renewing, recreating (creative) and "flow" experience that takes place within the strict rules and disciplined framework of sports, games and even medical and artistic occupations.
- 17 May, *ibid.*, p. 43.
- 18 Paper delivered by Alan McCoy, OFM, former President of *CMSM*.
- 19 Jessica Powers, *The House at Rest*. Carmelite Monastery, Pewaukee, Wisc., 1984, p. 13.



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PASSIONIST MINISTRIES



PAUL WADELL, C.P.

Habits of the Heart, A Review and Reflection

It is Alasdair MacIntyre who opens his book, *After Virtue*, with the "disquieting suggestion" that our moral world has not changed, it is gone. MacIntyre asks us to imagine ourselves walking upon the scene of a catastrophe. A world that was once there has been blasted into fragments, a universe in ruins, a smoldering reminder of a past we only dimly remember and vaguely understand. This is the landscape for our moral universe, the countryside in which we walk, and MacIntyre draws such a bleak depiction of our moral world to shock us with the fact that morality is something about which we talk much, but know little. We continue to use moral language, but without any sense of what it means, we make judgments and we come to decisions, but it is very hard for us to explain why we decide one thing over another; and if someone pressed us to give an account for what we think is good and what we consider evil, we would be speechless, not because morality has grown complex, but because it has disappeared. As MacIntyre says so vividly, "What we possess, if this view is true, are the fragments of a conceptual scheme, parts which now lack those contexts from which their significance derived. We possess indeed simulacra of morality, we continue to use many of the key expressions. But we have very largely, if not entirely lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality" (*After Virtue*, p. 2).

Habits of the Heart is *After Virtue* with an American twist. Published this year, it is a journey into the American soul. Six years ago, three sociologists, a theologian and a philosopher, set out to discover what

Americans think about themselves, how they understand themselves, what their values are, and how they feel about important moral terms like freedom, commitment, fulfillment, and happiness. *Habits of the Heart* is what they learned, and it is one of the most fascinating and gripping explorations of ourselves to emerge since Alexis de Tocqueville, one of the heroes of this book, told us how we looked to the world one hundred-fifty years ago.

But it is also disturbing. *Habits of the Heart* is not all good news; in fact, what good news there is stands only as a hope. Reading it is to look into a mirror and come away shaken, and that is exactly what the authors want; they do not like all they see, and neither should we. What they see most of all is individualism gone wild, a concern to protect the interests of a person, which has always been part of the American soul, grown so overwhelming that it obliterates any notion of the common good and, much worse, makes it impossible for us to



know what it would mean to be friends with one another. Not surprisingly, loneliness is a cry the authors frequently hear from the American heart, but for them the answer to loneliness is not intimacy, but community, people bonded together not to meet one another's needs, but to serve a purpose larger than themselves. As they say in the preface to the book:

The central problem of our book concerns the American individualism that Tocqueville described with a mixture of admiration and anxiety. It seems to us that it is individualism, and not equality, as Tocqueville thought, that has marched inexorably through our history. We are concerned that this individualism may have grown cancerous—that it may be destroying those social integuments that Tocqueville saw as moderating its more destructive potentialities, that it may be threatening the survival of freedom itself. We want to know what individualism in America looks and feels like, and how the world appears in its light (p. viii).

The world looks very different when there is no longer any curiosity about what might be real. What is missing in our moral landscape today is any sense that there is a purpose to life which is given, not created, a purpose in which human fullness consists that is not a matter of choice, but discovery. In former understandings of the moral life individualism was respected, but unintelligible apart from a shared appreciation of what a human being is. To become part of a community larger than ourselves was not to jeopardize individuality but make it possible, because selfhood was a question not of the freedom to choose, but of a willingness to love something worthy of ourselves. The question with which the moral life began was not what should we do with our freedom, but what should we love if our life is not to be wasted. Aristotle answered this by saying we should pursue the virtuous life, St. Thomas Aquinas said we should seek friendship with God; both implied selfhood was assured not when we have the freedom to pursue our preferences, but when we stand in relationship for a lifetime to the good in which human fullness consists. Ethics was teleological because life had a meaning. We were not born persons, we became them, and that process of becoming was a matter of pursuing not what we might prefer, but the very qualities capable of making us good. These were called the virtues. Through them we underwent the transformation necessary for goodness and that explains why they were not freedom's suppression, but its fullness.

This is strange language to our ears, but what *Habits of the Heart* suggests is that its strangeness is not a sign that an ethic of virtue is outmoded, but that we have lost a way of thinking about ourselves that might make us suspect there is more to our life than we imagine. We have a dangerous lack of curiosity which is expressed not in disinterest or apathy, but in the presumption that life means no more than

what we in our freedom take it to be. Consider how we speak of values. In a teleological ethic values were determined to be those goods which enabled us to achieve life's purpose. They were not chosen, nor were they arbitrary, for they constituted a way of life capable of bringing us to the fulness for which life was given. Moral values were not individually determined, but teleologically determined, for they were established in view of the end every human life was meant to achieve. This is why, for example, Aquinas said all genuine virtue must be formed from charity; there is simply no other love that can bring us to God.

What Aquinas saw as crucial, we do not see at all. For him, freedom had one purpose, to get us back to God; on the contrary, we desperately want our freedom, but often we are not sure for what. As the authors of this book say so well, "For most of us, it is easier to think about how to get what we want than to know what exactly we should want" (p. 21). Our morality is procedural, not substantive, for we think of the moral life not as a quest for the good, but as establishing the conditions that allow us to exercise our freedom with as least interference as possible. In the two hundred interviews the authors of this book conducted over six years, they discovered Americans cher-

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ish their freedom, but when pressed, we have a difficult time explaining how we think our freedom should be used. Freedom is the word we associate most with morality, but it dangles unattached to any purpose other than self-interest. In our society today, morality means not pursuing the good, for we are no longer clear what that means, but being free; and yet, what makes us uneasy about this celebration of our freedom is that a freedom whose meaning extends no further than self-interest is a freedom that is vacuous, a freedom that is boring, and a freedom that ultimately leaves us very lonely for it works not to bring us together, but to keep us apart.

The problem with a morality whose understanding of the good is limited to the imagination of personal preference, is that it lacks the power to deliver us from ourselves. The moral life was much more interesting when it was seen to concern God not just because God is infinitely good, but also because turning to God frees us from the impossible burden of trying to survive in a world no bigger than ourselves. A freedom that means nothing more than being left alone promises a happiness it can never deliver. Initially it may be delightful to pursue what we prefer without the irritating intrusion of someone telling us sometimes our preferences might be bad, but ultimately such a freedom is destructive, a terrible form of self-sabotage, for it fosters the deception that the good is no more than what we make it and our life has no more meaning than our whims. "Americans," the authors tell us, "tend to think of the ultimate goals of a good life as matters of personal choice" (p. 22). That is true, but if the good life has no more status than the fact that we choose it, it should be no surprise, they remind us, that the lives that should be so happy because they are so free also seem peculiarly isolated and arbitrary. In the first chapter of the book, appropriately called "The Pursuit of Happiness," the authors unveil the irony of a freedom unattached to any good:

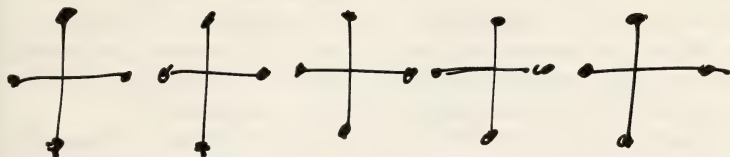
Freedom is perhaps the most resonant, deeply held American value. In some ways, it defines the good in both personal and political life. Yet freedom turns out to mean being left alone by others, not having other people's values, ideas, or styles of life forced upon one, being free of arbitrary authority in work, family, and political life. What it is that one might do with that freedom is much more difficult for Americans to define. And if the entire social world is made up of individuals, each endowed with the right to be free of others' demands, it becomes hard to forge bonds of at-

tachment to, or cooperation with, other people, since such bonds would imply obligations that necessarily impinge on one's freedom. . . . For Margaret, as for others influenced by modern psychological ideals, to be free is not simply to be left alone by others; it is also somehow to be your own person in the sense that you have defined who you are, decided for yourself what you want out of life, free as much as possible from the demands of conformity to family, friends, or community (p. 23).

A world defined by preference is hard to sustain. *Habits of the Heart* testifies that American society has broken down not only because our values have changed, but more pointedly because community is impossible when the only values we acknowledge are the ones we grant ourselves. People can live together and flourish only when they share a common good. What forms a society and holds it together is not so much the freedom of its members, but an understanding of purpose and goodness to which they dedicate their lives. Americans have a terrible problem agreeing on anything these days not because our country is large and our lives complex, but because, as the authors explain, "if selves are defined by their preferences, but those preferences are arbitrary, then each self constitutes its own moral universe, and there is finally no way to reconcile conflicting claims about what is good in itself" (p. 76). Moral arguments drag on, in fact, they are interminable, because when there is no consensus on what is good, no consensus on what it means for us to be a people or what purpose we should have, the only way to resolve moral disputes is through coercion. That is why our sense of justice today is so sadly impoverished; it is a virtue not of doing good, but of keeping people apart.

One of the most fascinating chapters of this book is on marriage. An interesting question to pose is what happens to our understanding of marriage, indeed, to what extent is marriage even possible, in a culture where the language used to define the self is primarily the language not of relationship but of autonomy, and where people think of themselves not as partners in a quest for the good, but as "arbitrary centers of volition" (p. 81). What is completely missing in our lexicon of the self is any notion of vocation. Traditionally, Christians have regarded marriage not primarily as a choice, but as a call, the special way God blessed a man and a woman to journey to the Kingdom through the love they had for one another. On this view, marriage is not only a partnership, it is a covenant, a relationship held fast not

strictly by the happiness one can bring the other, but by the God to whom both are called. When marriage is considered this way, its focus is not one partner beholding the other, but both beholding God, for marriage is seen not as an end in itself, but as a means to God.



It is quite different when the model for marriage is not sacramental but therapeutic. If one needs others basically to feel good about oneself, then all our relationships, whether of marriage, friendship, family, or religious community, become utilitarian. The value of another in our life is assessed not in terms of a good both of us are called to pursue together, which was Aristotle's understanding of genuine friendship, but in terms of whether or not this particular person enables us to feel good about ourselves. Being someone's spouse, friend, or fellow community member is like being their therapist, for the usefulness of the other cannot be extended beyond his or her capacity to help us feel better about ourselves. As the authors of *Habits of the Heart* say, "Therapy also redefines the ideal love relationship. Indeed, therapy becomes in some ways the model for a good relationship, so that what truly loving spouses or partners do for each other is much akin to what therapists do for their clients" (p. 100). Obligation is not part of this understanding of love, nor is sacrifice; but neither really is intimacy because in relationships based only on maximizing self-interest, where commitment remains purely a matter of preference, it is impossible for two people, so guarded to protect themselves, ever to know one another. "There is no longer any purpose to involvement with others except individual satisfaction," (p. 150) and when that is the case the moral life is over; people simply stop trusting one another.

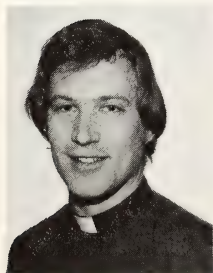
At the end of *After Virtue*, Alasdair MacIntyre proposed that the way out of "the new dark ages which are already upon us" (p. 245) is by the creation of communities of virtue, communities in which the moral life

can be rediscovered and pursued. In a way, the authors of *Habits of the Heart* suggest the same. For them, the way into the future is by retrieving something of our past, particularly that part of our American tradition that balanced the protection of the individual with the "creation of a community in which a genuinely ethical and spiritual life could be lived" (p. 29). They cite the Puritan tradition as an example of this, but encourage us to strengthen all those "communities of memory" which enable us to see interests beyond our own, which restore a notion of the common good, and assure us that happiness is not the pursuit of self-interest, but is loyalty to a purpose worthy of ourselves.

A hundred years ago Mark Twain had Huckleberry Finn explore the American soul as he navigated the Mississippi, that main artery in America's heartland. The authors of *Habits of the Heart* have done the same today. They give us a picture of ourselves, a rather unsettling picture, but they also give us hope, for they encourage us to deepen our commitments to those communities, such as the Church, which challenge us to consider ourselves not as "therapeutically liberated individuals," but as pilgrims, sinners, seekers of a God whose love is the healing we need.

Habits of the Heart is a superb, important book. It is fascinating, beautifully written, compelling and disturbing. It will receive all the attention it deserves. And it offers a response to anyone who has wondered why it is so hard today to sustain a community, have a friendship, or hold a conversation.

Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life. Authors: Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.



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1985

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a review of community life, apostolate and spirituality of the Congregation of the Passion, published for the english-reading world community of Passionists





The Passionist

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PREFACE

In this issue of THE PASSIONIST we are pleased to be able to bring together three articles which explore some current trends in our Passionist ministry. Fr. Timothy Fitzgerald, C.P. explores the continued effectiveness of the Parish Mission in the exposition of the faith and in evangelization. He then highlights some of the "new ways" the North American Church scene calls for further development of the Parish Mission.

An exciting challenge of the contemporary Church is the increasing involvement of the laity in Church ministry. Mr. James Greer, the first lay retreat director of a Passionist Retreat Center in the United States, in his reflection on his personal journey into ministry, eloquently identifies the Passion of Jesus as the siren song which draws him ever deeper into ministry.

Fr. Jerome Bracken presents four models for retreats for young adults that have developed from his efforts to meet their needs for community, prayer and mission. While each model has its own strengths and weaknesses, it is Fr. Jerome's conviction that the best model is one that not only helps the young adult experience the reconciling love of Christ but also integrates him into the missionary endeavor of the Church.

It is our hope that these are just the first of a series of reflections on developing trends in our various ministries.

In June, 1985, Fr. Harry Gielan delivered a series of commentaries on our new Constitutions at the St. Patrick's Province Congress. These commentaries were so well received that we plan to publish them in our next several issues. In this issue we present his commentary on Chapter IV of our Constitutions, "Apostolic Community."

Finally, we conclude this issue with a profound call to broaden our vision of our Passionist mission. In his article, "The Passionist Presence in Contemporary America," Thomas Berry challenges us to discover and take up our proper role in interpreting and alleviating the Passion of the Earth.

Michael Higgins, C.P.
Editor

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FR. TIMOTHY FITZGERALD, C.P.

Contemporary Trends in Passionist Parish Missions and Renewals

Introduction

This brief survey is not a scientific study of trends in the way U.S. Passionists conduct parish renewals and missions today. In fact, such a study may be a bit premature. There are many reasons why I say this. For one, it is extremely difficult to define or describe a theology of preaching in a moment of Church history where there are different ecclesiologies, different ways of interpreting the Scriptural mandate to preach, different ideas about what should be preached in a changing Church and world. For another, our Passionist spirituality and the community life which nourishes it, has undergone significant change.¹ A Passionist home missionary before Vatican II, for the most part, had a consistent and uniform "monastic" home life whether he lived in Boston, Florida, Chicago or California. Today, in Passionist apostolic life great differences exist in local communities, regarding lifestyle, numbers and the process by which the community arrives at its basic stance towards itself, the Congregation, the local Church and the world. Finally, the parish milieu in which the Passionist preaching ministry is carried out is vastly different than it was only a short while ago. The preacher who proclaimed eternal truths from the platform in pre-Conciliar days faces a whole new experience in almost every parish in which he ministers. In this completely new

situation for the preaching ministry, analyses abound, syntheses have yet to come.

Despite the broadly altered picture the Passionist ministry continues to function very well. Looking back over past issues of *The Passionist*, we see many examples of fruitful efforts to adapt the great heritage we have received to the life and mission of the contemporary parish. Thus, Fr. Walter Kaelin, C.P. speaks of an up-dated traditional mission.² Fr. John Render, C.P. uses great ingenuity in inviting the parish council to be an integral part of the mission.³ He also vividly presents to rural and city parishes his magnificent slide collection of the images of Christ through the centuries to bring to our people a

mission
ingenuity
images
charismatic
challenge
vitality
prayerfulness
dynamic

sense of their history in the context of the story of their redemption.⁴ Fr. Malcolm Cornwell, C.P. traces the possibility of utilizing the richness of the charismatic experience to the parish setting.⁵ Fr. Clemente Barron, C.P. gives forceful and urgent alternatives to our tra-

ditional approaches in a program for bilingual and bicultural communities, a challenge which looms ever larger before us as a U.S. Church as the number of Hispanic Catholics increase in our midst.⁶ In other ways, Fr. Roger Mercurio, C.P., surprises us with the vitality of Fr. Xavier Sutton, C.P., a far-sighted missionary of another era, who has much to offer to the Passionist preacher today;⁷ Fr. Paul Bechtold, C.P. pays loving testimony to the ongoing ingenuity of our home missionaries;⁸ and Fr. Leo Brady delightfully and incisively illumines the dynamic prayerfulness necessary to be a Passionist preacher.⁹ These samplings do not exhaust the many insights given in the pages of *The Passionist*, but they do convey the vibrancy and contemporaneity of the oldest and most venerable of our Passionist ministries.

Since no formal study has been made of the way in which so many of our active preachers of parish missions and renewals have adapted the message of the Cross to the modern scene, I would like to list three main areas which I have gleaned from input sessions at the annual meeting of the preaching ministry, from notes which appear from both Provinces' Mission Staffs, and from informal sharings with individual home missionaries. This is not meant to be exhaustive or all-inclusive. It is a modest attempt to see what is being done, and what possibilities lie ahead. The areas are: 1) exposition; 2) evangelization; and 3) the forging of new ways.

Exposition

By "exposition" I mean that kind of preaching which honors the basic kerygma of proclaiming the Paschal Mystery while offering a convincing explanation of what has happened historically and theologically in present-day Church life and mission. It is a special kind of catechesis very much needed in most parishes even after 20 years of post-Conciliar experience. As the voluminous coverage of the recent extraordinary Synod of Bishops in Rome showed, there is still no clear consensus among Catholics in our ordinary parishes concerning the changes of Vatican II. Neither the worst fears of some that this Synod might attempt to thrust us back into a pre-Conciliar experience as Church, or the fervent hopes of others that the Synod would reverse liturgical, pastoral and ecclesial approaches of the post-Conciliar period, did not materialize. In resolute, courageous and un-

spectacular fashion the Synod praised the work of renewal and urged greater efforts to bring about deeper understanding and more fruitful dialogue within the Church itself. At the time, the Synod stressed the supreme importance of continued dialogue with those outside the Catholic community who have witnessed this greatest event of our century with great attention, prayer and fervent desire for unity. Thus, the missionary goes into the ordinary parish today with a special call to explain patiently and clearly the many changes which have taken place over so short a time. For the home missionary is a trusted minister of the Word. His authority which derives from Christ and his Church, as well as the personal witness of the preacher himself, is still highly respected. He forms a bridge between the Church-which-was and the Church-which-is-coming-to-be. He is a vital link in the process of exposition underscored by Vatican II and re-emphasized by the recent Synod.

Speaking for the part of the country in which I exercise my preach-



ing ministry, this saving word of exposition is most vital. The problems facing the people of Western Pennsylvania are grave. In a dramatically short period, giant industries like steel and coal, have been greatly reduced. In small towns along the major waterways, people face a bleak future. Schools and Churches have to be consolidated. It seems only yesterday that relatively small mining and steel towns could easily support, spiritually and financially, parishes, schools, pastors, teachers and ministries of all sorts in a variety of ethnic complexes. With the demise of significant industries, the age and expensive maintenance of buildings, the decrease of population, the decline

in vocations to the religious life and the priesthood, and many other factors, the end of a glorious period in American Church life seems at an end. In the midst of this change, the preacher of the Good News, the proclaimer of the kingdom, the memorializer of the contemporary Passion has a special call to explain (in a theological sense of the word) the changes in the Church. To many, the Church seems to be one more, in a whole array of rock-like structures, which has betrayed the trust and expectations of the people. Through the enduring Word, the preacher proclaims the timeless message of the kingdom, the patience of the true believer in season and out of season, and the love of the Crucified for all in a rapidly changing world. Giving the weary a word that will rouse them, setting their sufferings and disappointments in the authentic perspective of the Cross, urging all not to lose hope and bathe themselves in useless blame, while speaking out forthrightly on issues of social justice and charity which surround the situation, takes the greatest courage and skill on the part of the modern expositor of Christian values.

What has been said of the smaller parishes, can be said in a slightly different context about the bigger city parishes. The urban situation is filled with shifting population, adjustment to racial and social changes, re-alignment of long-established neighborhoods, urban renewal programs which have profound effect on once stable parishes. Here again, the preacher does not pretend to have an answer for the immediate problems and inevitable changes going on, but he is entrusted with a solemn mandate to preach the Gospel of justice and peace, hope and cooperation, of a providential care of a loving Father for all his children as supremely shown in the liberating death of His Son. These basic insights of the Christian revelation were re-iterated in the great dogmatic constitutions of Vatican II: a Church for all times and peoples, a God who reveals Himself in a dynamic way in each heart and in on-going history, a ritual that is not dead, but which reaches out to the whole world as it "remembers" in the deepest sense the saving work of a living Lord, a faith which must be inculturated in every nation and locality, an ecumenism which is close as a neighbor and as all-embracing as the cosmos, itself groaning for redemption. But these great truths are often couched in dry and lackluster language and cry out for an interpreter to explain and flesh out, to enliven and make real for the modern ear and heart.

Nor is God's arm shortened or the missionary work enervated because so many to whom we are called to "explain" these great truths are elderly. This is not a work of supererogation, a kind of preaching to the saved. It is rather a word of Gospel reassurance to those who built our churches and schools, our rectories and our convents, financed and prayed for our great endeavors at home and abroad, gave



their children the benefit of a Catholic education (and often worry what it is they have done wrong when so many of their children and grandchildren are indifferent or antagonistic to the faith), and finally, are the mainstay of the Church's charitable and missionary ministries.

Likewise, this ministry of exposition is not confined to our public preaching to the people. How often fellow missionaries have shared with me, what is my own experience, that the clergy themselves are in need of healing and "explanation." A whole world has evaporated before their very eyes. The long hours of patient listening to a pastor or parochial vicar who have borne the brunt of pressure from above and from below is indeed an extension of our expository mission. Loneliness and a sense of failure can be very high with diocesan priests, as recent studies have shown, and our presence comes often at a moment when they most need encouragement, support, understanding and a faith explanation which is not condescending or pietistic in a bad sense, but puts the matter squarely back into the hands of the Lord. How well, Passionist preachers of parish missions know the reality of reverse evangelization in the quiet courage, faith and perseverance of these men. Sometimes even intransigence and cynicism can be a warning to our own hearts.

Evangelization

A parish mission is also a work of evangelization. The conversion of hearts has always been a central part of evangelical preaching. It has also been at the heart of parish ministry. After the Council, and especially after the publication of Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Evangelization in the Modern World*, there was a great deal of excitement about this aspect of Christian mission as it applied to the local Church and to the parish. Somehow this interest has been waning. In a recent phone interview, Fr. Kilian McGowan, C.P. asked Fr. Alvin Illig, C.S.P. for some comment on this decline of interest.¹⁰ In summarizing some of the factors at work, Fr. Illig singled out first the ineffective preaching of the Word. This touches on a vital point of Passionist parish missions and renewals as works of evangelization. Beyond exposition and encouragement, the preacher wants to convert hearts and to reach those who have strayed, or those who have not yet turned to Christ. While this is eminently a work of God's grace, Passionists have a strong tradition of emphasizing the need for the preacher's internalization of the Good News, the mastery of good preaching techniques and the zeal to reach out for those who yearn for God. In our tradition, going back to St. Paul of the Cross, sinners and the unchurched were tenderly, but firmly, invited back to sacramental encounter with the Lord. Those not of the faith were persuaded to search for the truth and to pray for conversion. As a permanent experience of the mission, priests and people alike were urged to continue the work of repentance, especially through a sustained prayer life. Young men and women were inspired on the mission (from the platform as well as in the confessional) to seek the Spirit's guidance in discerning their voca-

a special call

tion in the Church. We know how often the seed for a Passionist vocation was sown on a parish mission.

This evangelizing spirit is clearly alive in our contemporary preaching. Missionaries strive today to illuminate and further the

growth of the kingdom in their preaching. There are two areas which can be singled out: the Renewed Catechumenate for the Initiation of Adults and the restored Rite of Reconciliation.

The RCIA is viewed by specialists and non-specialists alike as an extraordinary process for the revitalization of parish and Church life. This paradigm of adult baptismal conversion is so versatile that it is seen as the basic model for all conversion experiences in the Church from initial conversion to the ultimate surrender in death. The Passionist preacher of today has immediately seized upon this marvellous instrument to carry out his fundamental task as an evangelizer. As religious, Passionists have experiential knowledge of the basic thrust of the RCIA. Historically, as has often been brought out in the many commentaries on the restored Rite, religious life preserved the many stages of the catechumenate: sponsorship, initial formation, the juniorate and on-going formation. All of these were theoretically supported by a strong community life. Many of our parish missions today, then, especially in the season of Lent when formal programs of the RCIA are underway, follow spontaneously the ritual in the development of the mission itself. At other times of the year the RCIA is a perfect outline for mission homilies, liturgical experience and paraliturgical services leading the faithful to a deeper appreciation of their vocation and mission in the Church and world. How powerfully does our traditional renewal of baptismal vows at the close of the mission bring out the desire of the Church today to underscore the meaning of Christian conversion in terms of a daily living out of our vocation to follow Christ.¹¹

Despite the concern on many quarters about the restored Rite of Reconciliation, the Passionist missionaries I have spoken to have seen the Rite as a natural overflow from our traditional emphasis on this sacrament of evangelization and conversion. The reputation of Passionist missionaries as kind, skillful and insightful ministers of reconciliation continues unabated. This is no community myth. Through ingenious and resourceful utilization of the restored Rite our missionaries have helped so many who have had a lifelong problem with the sacrament. Especially in the examination of conscience during penance services on a parish mission or renewal, our missionaries today have a direct link to our former catechisms for the sacraments. Thus, the restored Rite has enabled us to emphasize not only the forgiveness of sins and restoration to the Church's life, but also to stress, as the

theology of the restored Rite brings out, the clear and dramatic gratuity of God's love (the primary message of St. Paul of the Cross on his missions). The evangelizer also sharpens the penitent's awareness of the social dimension of our sinfulness, and at the same time, dwells on the deepening communion with the Church as a "support group" (if you will) in a sublime sense. Finally, the preacher of healing and reconciling power in this sacrament of Christ's love, underscores the psychological need to reverse the process of sinfulness by attention to the full meaning of the RCIA in a conversion experience which touches all levels of our human existence. How well does Fr. John O'Brien, C.P. point out the implications for a revitalized parish:

"One step towards correcting the underlying causes of the crisis in the Sacrament of Penance might be a new (really, old) understanding of the Church. *This would be an understanding of the Church which would make it easier for us to see and acknowledge our own sinfulness.* It would also make for a healthier parish community, I might add, where relationships would be more open and honest."¹²

The challenge to us as
Passionists missionaries
could not be clearer. As we
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century and the early part
of this one, so will we now.

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Forging New Ways

Signs for the future of Passionist preaching in parishes seems very hopeful. In support of this statement I should like to list, among other reasons, the following:

1) The American Bishops as a whole have undertaken a serious study of American parish life.¹³ This together with many other studies, indicates a strong effort to understand and to plan for the future of U.S. parish life. Integral to this planning is the spiritual renewal and evangelization of our parishes.¹⁴ By charism and readiness, Passionists will be a part of this future.

2) Already many parishes and dioceses have availed themselves of various renewal programs, e.g., RENEW and *Christ Renews His Parish*. Some dioceses have revived diocesan preaching teams with a full time ministry in parish renewal. As the Church moves towards a more collaborative model in the next few years, our own ministry of preaching will fit well into these programs, either as an actual part of the initial renewal experience, or as a follow-up to programs already initiated.

3) In the area of evangelization the need is undeniable. The Synod of Bishops in Rome has insistently urged that the momentum of evangelization not be lost.¹⁵ At the annual meeting of our own bishops last fall, stressed again was the urgency of ministering to the blacks, Hispanics and other minority groups in our country before it is too late.¹⁶ This is the same point made by Fr. Clemente Barron, C.P. in the article referred to earlier.¹⁷ The challenge to us as Passionist missionaries could not be clearer. As we responded to the needs of the immigrant Church in the latter part of the last century and the early part of this one, so will we now.

4) As we enter more fully as an American Church into collaboration with the laity, we sense that here is a wonderful new dimension which will enrich our ministry to parishes. Many individual missionaries have teamed up with brothers from our own community, with religious women and with lay persons. This is a new experience for us, admittedly, but one that is already in place in our other ministries such as our parish and retreat houses. It should be noted that many of the revived diocesan preaching teams regularly have lay people as part of the team in both the preaching and music ministries.

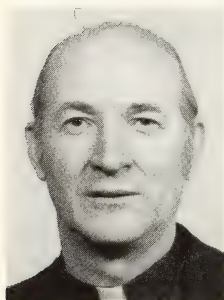
5) Finally, our call as Passionists is for preference for the poor. A universal cry comes today from the whole planet. The pathological condition of modern systems of government everywhere from first world to third world, have only served to underline the need for preachers of the Paschal Mystery, indeed, a "dangerous" memory, to show that personal salvation is linked intrinsically to fruitful action in all spheres of a just and sharing world community. We preach a Crucified Lord who brought salvation, not by involvement in the dynamics of political power, but by the forgiveness of a sinful family. Preaching the memory of the Passion in relationship to total conversion, faith experience, hopeful vision of solidarity, authentic inculturation of the faith which brings unity out of diversity, is a call to Gospel servitude. The Passionist preacher in union with his Lord says that the answer to peace is to live paschally and in hope.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Edward Schillebeeckx has commented on the changes which took place at the time of the rise of the mendicants. Their "mandate" to preach received its validity and strength from faithfulness to the life-experience of Jesus ("seuela Jesu") and poured out into their ministry of preaching ("vita apostolica"). Cf. "The Right of Every Christian to Speak in the Light of Evangelical Experience 'In the Midst of Brothers and Sisters,' " *Preaching and the non-Ordained*, ed. by N. Foley (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1983) pp. 32-37.
- 2 *The Passionist*, n. 6, pp. 5-11.
- 3 *Ibid.*, n. 6, pp. 12-14.
- 4 *Ibid.*, n. 10, pp. 57-69.
- 5 *Ibid.*, n. 2, pp. 33-41.
- 6 *Ibid.*, n. 6, pp. 15-30.
- 7 *Ibid.*, n. 5, pp. 54-68.
- 8 *Ibid.*, n. 8, pp. 36-38.
- 9 *Ibid.*, n. 9, pp. 68-79.
- 10 *Compassion* (Winter, 1985-1986) pp. 17-18.
- 11 I am indebted for these ideas to Fr. John O'Brien, C.P. who so lucidly connected the history of religious life with the RCIA in a

workshop he conducted for the Passionist Community in Pittsburgh, in 1984.

- 12 *Compassion*, (Winter, 1985-1986) p. 9.
- 13 *Parish Life in the United States: Final Report to the Bishops of the Parish Project*. Washington, D.C. U.S. Catholic Conference. 1983.
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.
- 15 "The Final Report," *Origins* 15: no. 27 (Dec. 19, 1985) p. 447.
- 16 Cf. the remarks of Bishop Michael Sheehan of Lubbock, Texas: "Making Evangelization a Priority," *Origins* 15: No. 28 (Dec. 26, 1985) pp. 464-469.
- 17 Cf. above, n. 6.



Fr. Timothy Fitzgerald, C.P. is currently stationed at St. Paul's Monastery in Pittsburgh. He is engaged mainly in the preaching of parish renewals and missions, as well as preaching retreats to priests, religious and laity.

Passionist Shared Ministry

"We must be Communities that are open in the sense of receptive, Communities that are free enough to be ministered to. It is here I think that we come close to the heart of our Passionist Community. As important as what we have to offer is, just as important is what we have to receive. Indeed, for us, what we have to receive is perhaps even more important, since what we are given is our very identity" (Studies in Passionist History and Spirituality, sub-section on Community, p. 47).

The Passionist expression of shared ministry, at least as expressed in my ministry, is one of strength finding root in powerlessness. It was in a Passionist Retreat House that I got my first glimpse of my own powerlessness. I didn't come to the Passionists for work. I came for help. My powerlessness was so deep in me that I was not conscious of it. I didn't even know enough to ask for help. As the Passionists I met acknowledged my giftedness, I became acutely aware of my spiritual and emotional poverty. I could not accept an all-powerful and loving God. The resurrection was beyond me. You might say that I was spoon-fed by the vulnerability of the wounded Christ through some very human Passionists.

I have found some very great obstacles to my own experience of Passionist Retreat House ministry. All of these obstacles have come from within myself. My first and foremost obstacle has been self-pity. This has been the deepest and most insidious of all my obstacles because, in its raw form, it is a denial of the Passion and crucifixion of Jesus. I will treat this issue first because it is a most serious disabler and completely removes the possibility of sharing, delegating, leading, or compassionating.

Self-pity is spiritual illness. It takes Jesus off the cross and replaces Him with me. It breeds resentment and rage (not anger). Self-pity is spiritual isolation. It puts me in a position of looking down on myself. It leaves me needy and at the same time sets me up to judge others. As minister, it is a sign that I have no belief in the resurrection and that the entire burden of humanity rests on my shoulders. It strips me of my sense of humor and puts me in a posture of protective self-isola-

Vision comes from a sense of strength in and through the resurrection and honest expression of need is as dignified as the words -

"It is better for you that I go."

tion. Self-pity denies me of God-power to approve of me so I must constantly seek approval from others. Ultimately, ministry dies in self-pity, not all at once, but progressively. Ministry is dignified and therefore shared. Team Ministry is compassionate. Jesus loses no dignity in the washing of the feet. He gives dignity.

When it comes to shared ministry, I am called to give up my shame. I must share my gifts and expect that my needs will be met, some by me (for God abides in me) and some by others. To share in ministry I must grow in security for very often I can feel as though I am losing something. I may feel as though I am losing a function, a role, my status. I may feel as though my needs for attention or affirmation might not be met. I really put it all on the line. At the same time I make a simple but not so easy acknowledgement that I am not able to do it all or, more fundamentally and freely stated, I choose freely not to do more than my share.

My observation and experience of Passionist shared ministry is that there is no theological quarrel about it. It is as natural as Jesus dying and

leaving the Church to his disciples—none of whom were qualified to run even a very small business by today's standards. Perhaps their success was generated by Jesus' choice to fail, humanly speaking.

My observation and experience tell me that it is not money that might hold us back. The very building I sit in has cost the Congregation millions of dollars to build and maintain over the years. Money can be obtained through the will to raise it for projects which excite people.

My ministry as a lay retreat director was given to me not out of self-pity, but partly out of need and partly out of vision. Vision comes from a sense of strength in and through the resurrection and honest expression of need is as dignified as the words "It is better for you that I go."

Shared ministry among clergy, religious and laity in Passionist ministries will always be imperfect, but the key is willingness. There must be a willingness to share in much the same way as my need to relinquish my self-pity. I must be willing to let go of my right to be my own savior. This requires a great deal of honesty and the honesty must go beyond words into my actions or inactions.

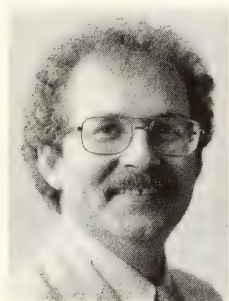
I can say that life is tough for just so long before I am ignored. I can blame the lack of help or the conditions around me for just so long without reaching out. As a team member, I can take more control over the team for just so long before destroying team. As a team member, I can take on less control of the team than is my share for just so long before destroying team.

Perhaps the first sign that team members are becoming team is the honest and clear impression of anger, hurt, or frustration without the implied threat of "I am leaving" or "I am completely taking over." Both of these speak of a perverse turn of ego toward self-pity. Both deny Jesus His place on the cross and His presence as resurrected Savior. Both kill sharing.

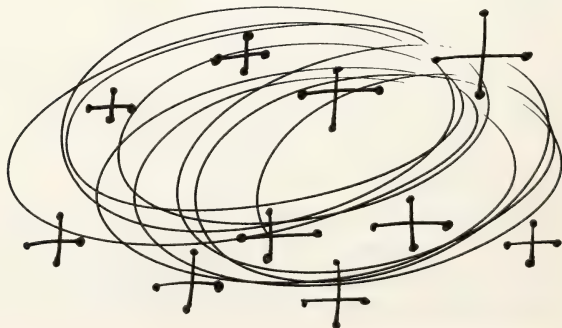
I have been fortunate to have friends. Friends who neither pity me nor cater to my every opinion. One of these friends is my wife, but many others, religious and laity, in and around the Congregation, are true Passionists and good ministers who share joyfully in the foot-washing.

To be a member of a ministering team in a Passionist Retreat House may not always be fun, but it certainly goes on the opposite

end of the solar system from something to be pitied. It is something to be shared.



Mr. James Greer is Retreat Director of Mother of Sorrows Retreat House in West Springfield, Massachusetts. He is the first layman to head a Passionist Retreat House in the United States. Jim, his wife Joanne and their three children, make their home in Springfield, MA and are members of Holy Cross Parish.



Trends in Young Adult Retreat Ministry

In this article about trends in young adult retreat ministry, I would like to do four things. First, it is important to situate these retreats in the general ministry to young adults. For this, I am using **YOUNG CATHOLICS: A REPORT TO THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS**, written by Joan Fee, Andrew Greeley, William McCready and Teresa Sullivan, in 1980 and also the document from the USCC: **A PLAN OF PASTORAL ACTION FOR SINGLE YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY; PLANNING FOR SINGLE YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY; DIRECTIONS FOR MINISTERIAL OUT-REACH**, put out in 1981. Second, to show how these directions can be applied, I will describe four retreat ministry models that are being implemented in the New York metropolitan area for young adults. Third, the model we used in our retreat program at Bishop Molloy Retreat House, Jamaica, NY., will be presented in greater detail to highlight certain features that could be part of this retreat ministry. Finally, I would like to make some comments on these models to suggest not only why there might be different trends in this ministry but also which ones deserve greater attention.

How should this ministry to young adults be carried out? **YOUNG CATHOLICS**, in interpreting a survey of people in the US and Canada, between the ages of 14 and 29, consisting of 1398 case studies in the US and 782 case studies in Canada (xi), makes some suggestions. These researchers found that young catholics experience a great deal of alienation from social institutions and norms (33-51). Personal, fa-

miliar and local community efforts are needed to overcome this alienation. What should be remembered is that human relationships and religious images have more power in keeping these youths connected with the Church than doctrine and ethical orthodoxy (233). So those in ministry should concentrate on empathic listening and quality preaching to foster this connection (235).

The USCC document supports the conclusion that young adults are disconnected or alienated. The causes are internal as well as external. Externally, the social constructs that support adult commitments are collapsing (13). Within, the young must face the multiple life-options presented to them. They are searching for an inner unity and are asking, "from what perspective . . . can (I) perceive my life and around what center can I integrate or pull together my life" (36). Fr. O'Neill suggests that "young adult" defines an attitude and position in

In community, single, young adults are strengthened by the sharing of personal, spiritual journeys. the loving support of Christian friendship and a growing understanding of their faith.

life rather than an age. "It begins at that turning point in life when the young person actively assumes for the first time major decisions which previously were left to their parents . . . (and) . . . continues until the person has undertaken the responsibilities normal to mature adulthood" (CAMPUS MINISTRY REPORT, Vol. 2. No. 1, September, 1975, p. 1).

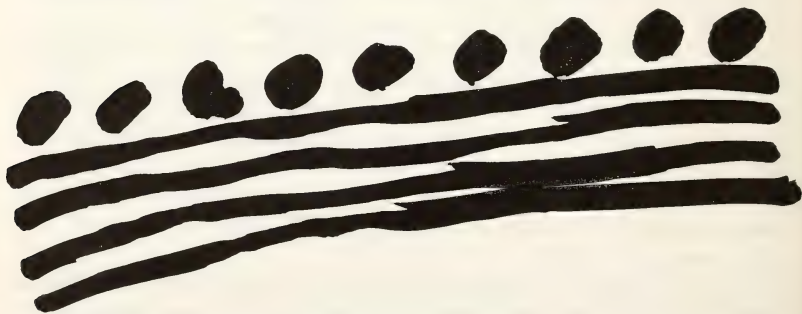
To minister to such people who are on the way to making a life commitment but experience a great deal of alienation, USCC suggests four dimensions of ministry: being present, listening, trying to heal and fostering integration (18-20). Being present is a matter of trying to be at the geographical and emotional place of the young adult. It is saying, "I care." Listening is an active process. One shows empathy for the person speaking, but one also tries to learn the language and perspective of the one speaking, so this can be the basis for future communication (19). The evangelization process of arousing the beginnings of faith (38) can not take place unless the person can understand the Good News in his or her own language, i.e. his actual needs, hopes and lifestyle (39). Such listening prepares the way for that dimension of ministry for which YOUNG CATHOLICS calls, that of healing a person from alienation (23, 230). This healing can take place in occasions of mutual forgiveness and more significantly in sacramental celebrations of Reconciliation and the Eucharist, (USCC, 49). Such sacramental celebrations point to the fourth dimension of this ministry, that of integration. It should take place within one's own self and with the Church. YOUNG CATHOLICS suggests that this integration be aimed at the family (235). Perhaps this is because "religious behavior is a 'primary group' phenomenon, influenced most powerfully by one's intimate relationships in the family of origin and family of procreation, as well as in the local religious community" (239). The USCC document highlights the local community aspect of this integration when it writes, "In community, single young adults are strengthened by the sharing of personal spiritual journeys, the loving support of Christian friendship and a growing understanding of their faith" (21). But this integration must go further, so that the young are inserted into the mission of the Church. This seems to be suggested when the USCC writes, "Shared ministry and decision-making hold great potential for integrating single young adults into community life" (21).

USCC applies these four dimensions of ministry to the parish scene (44-52), but we can apply them just as well in our retreat ministry. In fact these dimensions display themselves, more or less, in the four models of retreat ministry being used in the New York area.

Two of the models that are followed are quite standardized. The first imitates the Cursillo and Marriage Encounter Programs. This

model has such names as TEC (Teens Encounter Christ) and SEARCH. Usually a parish or group of parishes runs these programs. The format and topics covered are always the same. Even though the outline and content of the talks are determined, the co-ordinators insure variety by recruiting different religious and lay people to give the talks. What is significant is that young people from former retreats are asked to be part of the program and give some of the talks. By their doing this, they move beyond their own experience of healing and reconciliation into a new situation. They thereby fulfill a call to use their own gifts and share in the ministry of the Church.

The second model is also standardized, but only for a year's span of retreats. These retreats are usually run by retreat houses in a diocese, and are geared for high school and young adult groups. Our retreat house at Shelter Island is an example. Each year it determines a program for youth. Team members brain storm for ideas, recalling the numerous conversations they had with youth the previous year. That remembered dialogue becomes the basis for setting up a new program. This year the staff saw the need of stressing self worth. They composed talks on "the sacredness of life," ". . . of sex," ". . . of family," and ". . . of God in creation." To help them they recruited lay and religious volunteers, between the ages of 19 and 45. Sometimes these people would sit in on discussions, sometimes give talks. Their



participation in the ministry was meant to serve as a role model for what the young adults themselves could do. At the different sessions a video and oral presentation would be made and this would be followed by small group discussions. At those moments the staff mem-

bers would listen to the young people and invite them to respond. Such exchanges insured good communication, but they also gave the retreatants at least some experience of being accepted, reconciled and integrated into the Church community.

The two remaining models can be described as "ad hoc." In the first kind, a campus ministry team, usually with some college students, plans a retreat program for a weekend. What topics are picked and what format is followed is determined by the group planning it. For instance, the campus ministry team at St. John's University planned a retreat around the theme of social justice. They picked various articles for the retreatants to read and ran discussions on these topics. Usually time is set aside for private prayer and, as in the other retreat models, time is given for the celebration of the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist. Since the campus ministry program usually involves college students in the planning and running of its various programs, peer ministry is assured. Retreats are as good as the staff putting them together.

The last model is also for "ad hoc" retreats. It is different from college programs, in that it is run by a retreat house and draws its participants from a diocesan rather than a college community. Taking its cue from the way Our Lady of Sorrows Monastery in West Springfield, MA, ran its youth ministry programs, Bishop Molloy, NY, created its own "ad hoc" youth retreat program.

These individual retreats were related to each other so that they built into a continuous spiritual formation program. The following describes how this worked.

What was done to link the retreats one to another was very simple. At the end of each retreat, the participants were asked to write their evaluation of the retreat. Then, they were also invited to come back



for a discussion of these evaluations. At that session, the staff and retreatants would in the light of their discussion suggest possible themes, topics and formats for the coming retreat. So, the evaluation meetings were attempts to respond to the expressed needs of the retreatants themselves, as Malcolm Knowles recommends for any adult learning program (*THE MODERN PRACTICE OF ADULT EDUCATION; ANDROGOGY VERSUS PEDAGOGY*, 290ff). As a result of these sessions, we constructed retreats around the following questions. "How can I deepen my prayer life?" "How can I improve my relationships at home, at work and socially?" "How can I deal with chemical dependency in myself or others and deal with my own sexuality?" "How can I make a Christian moral decision."

How these retreats were put together also contributed to the spiritual formation of the young adults. After this first "needs-assessment" meeting, some staff members met to draw up a retreat program built around the suggestions that had been made. This program was submitted for approval and modifications to all those who had volunteered to work on the next retreat. Then the volunteers were asked to serve on one or another of the committees.

Each committee had its own task to fulfill: promoting the retreat, writing retreat talks, composing prayer services, preparing the musical and liturgical actions for the celebration of the two sacraments, training to be a discussion leader and working on hosting and hospitality aspects of the retreat. Committee members were appointed on the basis of their talents and interests. By doing it this way we hoped to affirm the people in their own special gifts and show them there are multiple ways of taking part in the missionary aspect of the church.

For instance, Vincent, an epileptic, had the use of only one hand and came close to stuttering while speaking in a group. His warmth and affability, though, were excellent for doing promotion work. And he was conscientious about it. Even on rainy nights, he would take two or three busses to come to the retreat house to make phone calls to people who had expressed an interest about coming on a retreat. Another person who worked on the promotion committee was Michelle. Her talent in art was in inverse proportion to her height! She did all the art work for the retreat, fliers, posters, etc.

Such committee work was done during the next few months at a series of meetings, each lasting about two hours. Usually they were held

on a Sunday afternoon, and surprisingly the volunteers gladly came on these days. Below is a sample calendar of events.

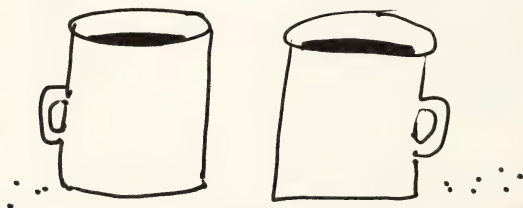
FUNCTION	DATE
Needs assessment meeting	Sept 18
Small Staff Preparation	Sept 21
Evaluation of program and recruitment of volunteers.	Sept 25
Promotion and Hospitality Comm. Meetings.	Oct 2
Phone call promotion	Various evenings
Talk Comm. Meetings	Oct 9, Nov 6
Prayer Comm. Meetings	Oct, 16, Nov 13
Liturgical Comm. Meetings	Oct 16, Nov 20
Team Evening of Recollection	Oct 31
Planning Meeting for Thanksgiving	Nov 20
Retreatants Evening of Recollection	Nov 23
Discussion Leaders' Meetings	Dec 4, 11
Wrap-up Meeting	Dec 11
Retreat	Dec 16-18
Evaluation Meeting	Jan 8

It might seem that having eleven meetings to prepare for the December retreat is too much. The meetings, however, served two purposes, that of fulfilling a task and that of developing the people who fulfilled them. For instance, at the talk meetings the whole group would brain storm for ideas. Then the young adults would discuss in detail the ideas they considered the most important. The person to write the talk was encouraged to use what the group had learned. The writer was also instructed to consider what scriptural references would deepen the theological dimension of those ideas. At the next meeting, this person would present the talk to the group. In the process ideas would be sharpened and the teachings of the church explored more fully. Often these discussions turned into mini-retreats themselves. Fran was the catalyst for one of these sessions. She was assigned to give the talk on the Church's teaching about pre-marital sex. She herself found the teaching to be negative and close to meaningless. There was a lot of discussion about this. When Fran came back with her talk, it was evident what had happened. Not only had she discovered the value of the church's teachings, but she had come

up with her own insights as well. Similar growth experiences occurred at the liturgical preparation and prayer service meetings.

Even our training sessions for the discussion leaders turned into spiritually profitable meetings. One reason was that we wanted these leaders to be familiar with both the techniques of leading a discussion and the contents of those discussions. To insure that this would happen, those writing the talks were asked to draw up a list of discussion questions based on what they said. These questions served as interesting points of departure for the discussion leaders themselves.

The retreat itself was built of many other elements beside the particular retreat topics. Hospitality was an important element. Those on that committee were to welcome the retreatants and try to make



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them feel at home in the new community setting. Meals together, a get-acquainted session, in which all the retreatants would be engaged in some small group project, participation in small group discussions, prayer services, recreation and refreshment periods were all built to foster this community atmosphere. Our hope was that what was being proclaimed would be experienced in the community itself.

There was also time for private prayer and one-on-one counseling. In these ways, we endeavored to make the experience not just something of the head but of the heart as well. When the celebrations for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist had come, the ground work for a community expression of worship had already been laid. Team members had worked for that moment, with the hope that the retreatants would take that experience with them when they left the retreat.

As the reader can gather from these descriptions retreat ministry to young adults can fulfill the functions of being present, listening, healing and bringing about integration in various ways. There are advantages and disadvantages in each of these models.

The standardized Parish retreat model has the advantage of limiting the planning of the retreat to the preparation of the talks. This is an economical use of time. In addition, this retreat involves the youth in a peer ministry themselves, at least for one more retreat if not for several. The disadvantage of this model is that it cannot be part of an ongoing process of spiritual formation. The hope I think, is that the retreatant will get some of this by being more deeply connected to his parish, which had sponsored him for the retreat.

The second standardized model, used in retreat houses, is also economical. One period of planning can be used for a full year, with only minor adjustments having to be made. There is an attempt in this model to make the retreat a listening and emphatic one, so that the retreatant is made to feel reconciled with God, himself and the Church again. What is lacking is that the young people themselves are not directly involved in assessing and meeting their spiritual needs by planning and running the retreat.

The "ad hoc" model of the colleges can also be effective in meeting the needs of the college students, if those on the campus ministry team not only listen to but have as part of their team the college students themselves. In general, however, these "ad hoc" retreats are "one-shot" deals, sometimes successful, sometimes not. Under these conditions, the staff members must expend a lot of energy putting a retreat together, all of which is then used only once. The next retreat is something entirely new. So the possibility of making the retreats into an on-going spiritual formation program both for the retreatants and the college staff members themselves is limited just by the circumstances of the college scene, itself.

The "ad-hoc" retreats run in retreat houses have a much better chance at on-going formation. The clientele is not limited to college students, but much more diversified. Because volunteers are invited,



Listening is an active process

those who come to take part in running the retreat can exhibit the multifaceted nature of the people of God. On Molloy's staff at Jamaica, there were school teachers, office workers, mechanics, policemen, and students. Some people had exceptional abilities; some had disabilities. All, however, could exemplify what Church, the people of God is all about. By just seeing such a diversified staff, retreatants experienced what it is to be church: people reconciled, healed, sent.

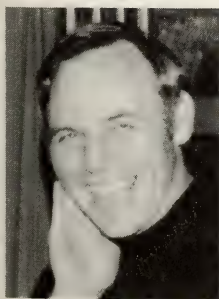
Moreover, because the retreatants are asked to give their own evaluation and suggestions regarding the retreats and are continually invited back to make a retreat on a theme they had part in suggesting, they can exercise a certain responsibility for their own spiritual formation. Also, by involving some young adults in the running of the retreat we provide them with an opportunity of taking part in the ministry of the Church. Such involvement has far reaching effects. It leads to the deepening of their own spiritual life, even as they prepare to minister to others.

A good example of this is what happened to a young woman who was assigned to give a talk on Mother Theresa at a prayer service. Afterwards, a lot of the retreatants came up to compliment her on it.

She thanked them, but then began to think to herself. "Why should I be complimented; I didn't do those works of charity; Mother Theresa did. What am I doing?" Such questioning led this woman to become a member of a house that cared for homeless women. Now that she has gotten her degree, she is serving as a full time nurse at one of the hospitals in Long Island. Another retreatant and his wife are using their experiences from working on the retreat in their CCD work in the parish.

Though this final model devotes a great deal of time to preparing for the retreat, even though the retreat itself is given only once, this expenditure of time is not as uneconomical as it first appears. The preparation for the retreat does three things. It builds a real sense of community among the staff people themselves as they use their own gifts and face the inevitable limitations of one another. Secondly, their preparation leads them to examine their own spiritual life and ideas at a deeper level. Finally, this involvement in the task of ministry fully integrates the young adults in the Church community. Besides experiencing the reconciling love of Christ, as other retreatants are invited to do, these peer ministers become part of the missionary endeavor of the Church.

Seeing the advantages and disadvantages of each of these models, it is easy to understand why there are different trends in the retreat ministry. Limitations of time, creativity and personnel make choosing a simpler model sometimes necessary. Ideally, however, the trend should aim at the full integration of the youth in the Church. To be forgiven and reconciled is only the beginning of being Church, to be sent is sharing in its fullness—aliens no longer, but sent by God as His beloved.



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Apostolic Community

The purpose of this article is to reflect on Chapter IV (# 62-76) of our new Constitutions, approved March 2, 1984.

This chapter of our new Constitutions reflects a serenity that did not always characterize the discussion which produced it. It is the result of a protracted and often painful effort on behalf of the Chapter members to combine two fundamental dimensions of the apostolate of our Congregation: the respect for the original inspiration and the exigencies of today's concrete needs in their tangible variety all over the world. To some this final text may sound too general, but it should be realized that it is meant to serve as a guideline not only for Western countries but equally for our expanding communities in many parts of the Third World.

The chapter is clearly divided into four parts: (1) Introduction (# 62-63); (2) The Passion in our Apostolic Activity (# 64-66); (3) Community Dimension in our Apostolate (# 67-69); and (4) Areas of our Apostolic Activity (# 70-76).

1. *Introduction*

The two introductory paragraphs sketch in a concise and dense way the theological background of our apostolate.

A close look at paragraph 62, for example, makes us discover no less than *twenty key-ideas* that are evoked by the very term of Passionist apostolate. The list of these key-ideas is as follows: (1) *The Kingdom of God* (2) *is spread by the Church* (3) *to bring everyone to share in* (4) *Redemption and Salvation* (5) *by relating the entire world to* (6) *Christ*. (7) *Being deeply immersed in the Church* (8) *religious* (9) *participate in a distinctive way* (10) *in the Church apostolate* (11) *by their total commit-*

ment. (12) It is *our Congregation's* special task (13) to *render fruitful Christ's love* (14) as eminently expressed in his *Passion* (15) whose *memory* (16) should be *lived and celebrated*. (17) *Our Founder's* example and teachings (18) constitute an inspiring *heritage* (19) involving *all of us* (20) in the apostolic endeavors *required by our time*.

The above paragraph certainly ranks among the richest in content of the whole Constitutions. It is a worthwhile effort to look at our apostolate from the right perspective which is no other than Christ's ongoing mission within the Church for the benefit of today's world. But this paragraph, as such, reflects an approach which stems from a "deductive" theology. It could be an inspiring challenge for a community discussion to describe our apostolate by starting "from below," i.e., by way of an "inductive" theology.



The final version of the next paragraph (# 63) shows the scars of long discussions during the Chapter sessions. It refers to important aspects of our apostolates, but without presenting them in a clear and synthetic way. What we discover in some Vatican II documents is also revealed here: namely, that a given discussion sometimes comes to a conclusion not by way of harmony, but by way of juxtaposition of important elements.

The following aspects are stressed in this paragraph: (1) The apostolic nature of religious life (but the implicit reference to *Perfectae Caritatis*, # 8, is somewhat distorted). (2) Participation in the apostolate by all the members, according to their talents and situations. (3) The importance of the ministry of the word. (4) This word, as the good news of salvation, creates community among all believers. (5) The example of Jesus, who "went about doing good," invites us to be "doers of the word" through preaching and through involvement in the needs of people.

The above summary confirms the initial remark that this paragraph is far from excelling in unity and clarity. What seems to be aimed at is "a theology of preaching," but it is obscured by heterogeneous elements.

2. *The Passion in our Apostolic Activity*

The introductory statement of this section (# 64-66) links the Passion of Jesus with his resurrection. Within that context there is room for a religious institute to stress the central value of "the word of the Cross" in Christian life.

The next paragraph (# 65) stresses the link that exists between Jesus' Passion and the ongoing suffering in mankind. Since the official English translation has not been completed as of this date (June, 1985), here is my own rendition of this passage: "His Passion and Death are no mere historical events, but ever present realities in the lives of so many today. Where people are wounded by unjust denial of rights, scourged by life and for the quality of life, tormented by their thirst for peace and the truth that makes us free, there we recognize and proclaim the suffering Saviour."

The original term adopted by the General Chapter was "those who are today *crucified* by injustice;" this has been "censured" to read "where people are *wounded* by unjust denial of rights . . ." There are more cases of such small but significant censures in this chapter. See, for example, paragraph # 72 where the text of the General Chapter read: "Guided by the teaching of the Church and by our consecration to the Passion of Christ, we consider our involvement on behalf of justice and our struggle for the dignity of the human person as constitutive and essential parts of our way of living and our ministry." This has been changed into: "Guided by . . . we strive to make our lives and apostolate an authentic and credible witness on behalf of justice and human dignity." But did not the Synod of Bishops, in 1971, state clearly: "The struggle for justice and the participation in the transformation of the world is a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel"?

The second Target of the 1982 General Chapter was formulated as follows: "As a community we reflect on the meaning of the 'memory of the Passion' to discover the profound link between the Crucified One and the crucified of the world today, as the decisive factor in our

life and mission." We won't find a terminology of that kind in the writings of our Founder. We cannot possibly expect from somebody who lived in a different cultural and religious era to adopt a language that has become familiar to us. The language of St. Paul of the Cross is a language of "Christianity" (or Christendom), without any influence from the anthropological revolution that was seeking its way during his very lifetime. He perceives the misery of his days and denounces them in a "christian style" by saying, for example, that "to forget the Passion is the cause of deplorable disorders and plagues."

His style of speaking is, however, a more authentic language than was often used at that time, especially in the pastoral letters of the bishops. So, a bishop of Ghent (Belgium), in 1806, preached resignation in front of social inequality in the following terms: "Some live in poverty, others in luxury; that's the way Providence has wanted it and it is one of the most tangible proofs of God's goodness and wisdom. It may seem that God is not concerned about the misery of the poor. He is acting that way in order to entrust them to the hands of the rich."

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welfare of the Church.

Or, to quote another text of those days that exalts the divine vocation of the army: "What is an army? It is a group of people vindicating God's justice and commissioned to kill those who deserve death. What are two armies that fight each other? They are servants of that justice

who punish each other and who only put to execution what God has ordered" (Nicole, *Essais de morale*, 1773).

We are far off, in our days, from such a language. We have become more familiar with an analysis such as the following: "The eight capital sins of civilized society are: overpopulation, the destruction of the environment, the frenzy of development, the death of feelings, the genetic decay, the abolition of tradition, indoctrination, and the nuclear arms race" (Konrad Lorenz). The language of "christianity" does not proceed by way of analysis. It designates the complex reality with religious terms. We could not adopt such a language anymore. We are, however, challenged to integrate its vision which opposes—as St. Paul of the Cross does—the love manifested in the Passion of Jesus ("the greatest and most overwhelming work of God's love") to disorder, misery, oppression, and individual or collective exploitation.

More and more, we hear the voices of oppressed individuals and groups who look at history from the other side ("desde el reverso de la historia"), urging us to listen to their piercing questions. Consider, for example, the African author, Cheikh Amidou Kane, in his book *L'aventure ambiguë*: "The worshippers of God have governed the world for a long time. Have they governed according to His law? I don't know. I have heard that in the country of the whites the rebellion against misery is not distinguished from the rebellion against God. How great must have been the fault of those who believe in God, if at the end of their dominion of the world the very name of God evokes the resentment of the hungry?"

Ever since the Enlightenment the Church, in our Western countries, has been concerned to think her faith in terms of unbelief and atheism. The time has come that she will have to think it in function of injustice and of the demands of justice which are inseparable from God's name. This implies that we have to learn to spell the message of the Cross in solidarity with those who are really poor and oppressed. Our theology of the Cross, our Passion spirituality are challenged to look for their proper "geography," which is no other than the Golgotha of our days in its different shapes all over the world. It is not enough for a religious group to have beautiful Constitutions, in which we pledge our commitment to the poor. According to Matthew 25 we won't be judged on our statements about the poor, but on what we did or did not do to them.

The next paragraph (# 66) refers to the equally important pastoral practices of keeping alive the memory of Jesus' Passion in the field of prayer: "Our Founder urged us to be tireless in teaching others how to meditate in the best and easiest way upon the Passion of Christ. We have therefore to be sensitive to the values inherent in the religious devotion of people today. We should also use loving initiative to find new and creative ways of deepening the prayer life of others as



well as our own. This was what St. Paul of the Cross did in his own day, zealously undertaking the spiritual direction of individual persons; and this same fruitful ministry the faithful of Christ continue to seek from us today."

3. Community Dimension of our Apostolate

Recent developments in religious life, as we already mentioned earlier, have emphasized the importance of the community dimension. This dimension, particularly in Western society, is not so much opposed to the prevailing trend towards self-realization, as in fact it has been provoked by it. The very search for our authentic self reveals our dependence upon others. As Martin Buber put it: "People offer each other the heavenly bread of the true self."

But it remains true that an inevitable tension will exist between the demands of our life in community and the personal gifts of the brethren. On the one hand paragraph 67 tells us that "since we have been

called to serve the Church in and through community, we should have special concern for those forms of the apostolate that are enriched by, and in turn nourish, community life." On the other hand we are at the same time exhorted, in paragraph 68: "We have to be generous in recognizing the gifts of every member of the community, and esteem and encourage every apostolic service undertaken for the benefit of others."

On purpose no explicit mention is made of the brothers in the area of the apostolate. The overall concern to avoid making a division between priests and brothers is reflected in the statement of paragraph 68 which is meant to include *all* the community members without distinction: "*All* the religious should be given suitable opportunities to make use of their various gifts in the many different apostolic works that the Congregation carries out for the welfare of the Church."

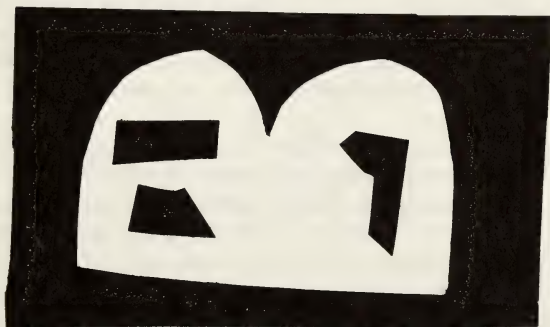
A separate paragraph (# 69) draws our attention "to the need to collaborate responsibly with the people of good will everywhere in pursuing all that is true, noble and just." More than in the past both communities and individual religious have to rely upon the efforts of others, indeed of all Christians, in view of the common task of establishing the Kingdom of God. Religious should be particularly concerned about the kind of Church they want to serve and to promote: "If we do not want to turn into a tiny church composed of a dilettante elite or into a cowed and intimidated minority, then the task is laid on us of turning more and more from being a Church *for* the people that seems intent on protecting and sheltering them, to being a Church *of* the people: in other words, to work towards the people learning more and more to understand itself as the agent in this Church, as the agent of its history before God" (Johannes B. Metz).

4. Areas of our Apostolic Activity

Six areas of apostolic activities are explicitly mentioned in this section (# 70-76): (1) Service of the Word, especially by the preaching of parish missions and spiritual exercises; this is said "to remain our special and central activity." (2) The work undertaken among de-christianized groups. (3) Involvement on behalf of justice and the struggle for the dignity of the human person. (4) Ministry on the level of the local Church in cooperative and well-planned pastoral action. (A clause from the Regulations has been inserted here into the Constitu-

tions (# 73): "Only after careful discernment at local and provincial level, and with the consent of the Superior General with his Council, can we accept the care of parishes.") (5) Ecumenical activities. (6) The evangelical task of proclaiming and establishing the Kingdom of God among all peoples. (See # 75: "Every member of the Congregation should see our missionary apostolate as one of our primary and central activities, for which all accept a personal responsibility.")

The perspective from which these different apostolic activities have to be undertaken is indicated throughout the text by repetitive phrases, such as: "apostolic endeavors required by our time" (# 62), "caring concern for those among whom we live" (# 63), "adaptation to the changing needs of time and place" (# 76). This repeated emphasis on openness and adaptation is in harmony with an authentic understanding of our charism. Charism is essentially a relational concept: i.e., it points to an initial inspiration which keeps its vitality and validity only in as far as it is re-lived and re-created in ever new circumstances.



In an unpublished manuscript Fr. Stanislas Breton attacks the fundamentalist attitude which identifies what is *essential* with what is *past*. It then becomes impossible to understand the radical changes of recent history often imposed upon us in spite of us. He makes a distinction between tradition as *a support* and tradition as *a norm*:

Tradition as a support is the whole of foundation events to which we refer when we speak of the origins of our Congregation. These events, col-

lected in a tale that is more or less common to all of us, are a necessary part of a collective memory that binds us to a past which is an indispensable element of our existence. If we would not have that memory anymore, if we suffered from total amnesia, we would become incapable of saying "I" or "We," we would be condemned to a life without depth, to a life dispersed in the discontinuity of fragmentary moments. To avoid such a fragmentation, such a schizophrenia, we have to project our present into a past in order to support it. That is tradition as a support. Far from underestimating its value, I stress its urgent necessity.

But having said that, and it should be said, the tradition as a support could not claim to be the unconditional norm of life, valid for all times and all places. And this for a very simple reason, which can be formulated as follows: any memory, even a collective memory, is necessarily *historic*. It is invited, therefore, under the impact of the occurring changes, to look at our very origin in a different way. The Founder or the creator are constantly re-created by their creatures. Thus, we are historically responsible for the *new* existence that we will give, by our action and our courage, to our foundation itself. But to recognize this massive fact is to recognize at the same time that a new existence requires a new regulation of our being and of our acting; that we are in permanent need to invent our Passionist essence, because we cannot dissociate essence and existence. Consequently, we have to admit that tradition as a support, however venerable it may be, cannot be functionally equivalent to a normative tradition.

We do not choose ourselves the social and cultural circumstances in which we live and work; they are pre-given realities, varying from continent to continent and from country to country. An accurate analysis of the concrete situation which one is facing in a given area is a prerequisite that should determine the forms of action to be undertaken. The concluding remark of this chapter points in that direction (# 76): "Each Province as a whole, as well as each local community, is responsible for making a mature appraisal of its apostolic activity, and for assessing current forms of collaboration in case these need to be adapted to new circumstances of time and place."

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Reflections on the Passionist Presence in Contemporary America

The Passionist Province of St. Paul of the Cross is no longer in its expansionist period. Some 20 years ago, in the mid 1960's, a significant decline in vocations began, a decline that has continued until the present. This decline did not originate from within the congregation so much as from changes in the world around us. When the surroundings change we must change. If we change creatively we emerge with a new life vigor. If we simply submit to the process our vitality is diminished. This according to the biological law that significant change in environment requires change in the organism if it is to flourish or even to survive.

We have indeed committed ourselves to a long series of changes in the past few decades; but if we examine these changes and their consequences critically we find that they have not brought about as extensive a revitalization as we might wish. We have only mitigated the situation in a consolidation program that remains indecisive in its long-term consequences.

If we list the more significant deleterious changes in our present world we might list the threat of nuclear war, the increase in financial disorder, industrial decline, unemployment, along with individual and family disintegration. Beyond all these however is the closing down of the basic life systems of the planet earth itself through toxic poisoning and industrial abuse of the air, the water, the soil, the vege-

tation and the other living forms in the world about us. Yet this situation is not referred to in any of our deliberations.

That we should be so unconcerned with the destiny of the earth is an indication that we are not dealing effectively with the real life situation either for ourselves or for those to whom we communicate. It is also perhaps an indication that religion has become alienated from the more urgent, even from the survival issues of our times. If this is so then we cannot be surprised that we are not attracting greater numbers of the competent and even the dedicated youth of our times who are profoundly committed to a life of service directed toward the well-being of the earth and its living creatures.

That the theological import of the degradation of the planet escapes us as Passionists is not indeed surprising since it has escaped signifi-



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cant attention throughout the church. Neither the theologians, nor the hierarchy, nor the Catholic universities, nor our Catholic news media have given it significant attention. Nor did the second Vatican Council advert to this issue although the threat to the life processes of the earth had already been identified by Rachel Carson in her startling presentation of *Silent Spring* in 1962.

As Passionists we are particularly liable to miss this larger context of survival, as well as its human and christian implications, since our meditation on the Passion has absorbed our conscious awareness, our institutional deliberations, and our spiritual teaching. Consideration of the Passion, however, in a simplistic context does not assure our survival as an effective religious community. The history of the christian community clearly indicates that during its periods of florescence christian thought and action were situated at the center of human process.

We are indeed striving to do just that through our preaching, through our peace and justice programs, and through our option for the poor. While these are urgent tasks, they are themselves dependent upon resolution of other more comprehensive issues. How can we succeed in our option for the poor when this country is losing six billion tons of topsoil every year; when the soil itself has become toxic with chemical fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides; when the rain has become acid and is destroying rather than nourishing our eastern forests? In this condition the earth will soon not be able to produce nourishing food for the poor or for anyone else.

But while these consequences in the natural world are indeed great, there are even more profound issues involved. Foremost of these are the consequences in religious consciousness, for we depend upon the created world about us for our knowledge of the "invisible nature" of God (Romans 2:21). That the world we perceive is such a resplendent world in its form and functioning is what enables us to have such a splendid sense of God. Any extensive degradation of the earth in its primary functioning inevitably affects our sense of the divine, just as we lose the full range of our thinking when we lose our experience of the great birds in flight, our experience of the animal or vegetative world, our experience of the rivers and the sea, or our experience of atmospheric phenomena. All these affect our imaginative and emotional as well as our intellectual powers. If we lived on the moon our sense of the divine would reflect the lunar landscape. Our imagination and emotions would be as desolate as the moon.

It is perhaps not too much to say that if a magnificent planet plays an important role in elevating our sense of the divine then a degraded planet will lead toward a degraded sense of the divine. This obviously strikes at the very root of christian consciousness upon which our faith depends.

When the surroundings change
we must change.

Then we must consider that the sacraments we administer are themselves subverted in their symbolism when the natural world becomes toxic. Polluted water cannot be used for baptism since it becomes a symbol of death rather than of life. So too with the bread of the Eucharist, we must ask if this too is not affected in its nourishing qualities by the chemical processes of growing and processing, and therefore becomes a less appropriate symbol for spiritual nourishment.

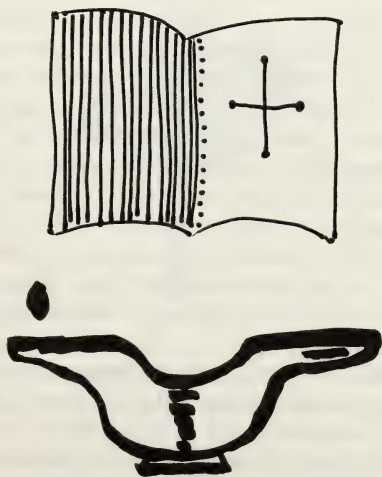
An even more radical question arises when we consider that the present assault on the earth is taking place in a western cultural context that has emerged out of a christian matrix which has neglected its creation concerns in favor of redemption concerns. This, together with the generally insensitive attitude of christian theologians and church authorities toward the decline in the well-being of the earth, seems to indicate a certain deficiency in christian tradition itself in its historical realization.

The various creeds in which christian faith is expressed simply mention an original creation and lightly pass on to the essential issues of Trinity, Incarnation and Redemption. This gliding past Creation is evident in the Apostles Creed and in the Creed of Nicea. So too in the *Catechism* of the Council of Trent and in the derived *Baltimore Catechism*. No significant attention is given to the created world or to the earth and its role in theological thought or in religious life. The problems are redemption problems, scriptural interpretation, validity of sacraments, and moral norms. This deficiency in christian consciousness can be identified also in christian moral teaching which shows its competence in dealing with suicide, homicide and genocide; but which collapses completely when we come to biocide, the killing of the basic life systems of the planet and genocide; the destruction of the planet itself as habitat for the higher life forms in their present realization.

In its revelatory role and also in spirituality, the natural world does appear in such writers as Hildegard of Bingen and in St. Bonaventure; also in the endless analogies of St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) in his *Treatise on the Love of God*. Even this spiritual role of the natural world, however, has been diminished in the last three centuries, especially after the doctrines of naturalism came under condemnation and a new prominence was given to a defense of the supernatural over against the natural world.

Meanwhile the industrial plundering of the earth had begun; the automotive, petrochemical, electronic and nuclear industries with their cumulative impact on the basic life systems of the earth. While the papal pronouncements on social issues have piled up, none so far have dealt with this larger devastation of the planet or its ultimate physical or moral consequences on the human species.

If christians remain unconcerned with this situation, a large number of persons, many with high spiritual motivations as well as leadership competence, have dedicated themselves to structuring a new mode of human-earth relations. Hundreds, even thousands, of such



groups have taken shape in this country. Among these are learned societies; activist groups such as Greenpeace and Earth First and Clearwater; conservation societies defending the land from abuse; groups such as the Land Institute of Wes Jackson in Salina, Kansas, the New Alchemy venture on Cape Cod, the Regeneration Project of the Rodale Center in Pennsylvania. There are legal associations such as the Natural Resources Defense Council. All together some 12,000 such groups now function in this country with an additional 250 new groups added each year. Through these groups the dominant social paradigm of reality and of value is being changed into what can be designated as the new paradigm of the integral earth community. In this context all our institutions, professions, programs and activities are being transformed. Not least of these is the moral and religious functioning of our society.

But even while this new sense of the integral functioning of the planet appears, the corporate business and financial establishments are experiencing a new euphoria. Money values are rising to astronomical heights. The stock market has in a short period risen over four hundred points. Great conglomerates are being formed. All of this is placing even greater stress upon the natural functioning of the earth. A new vigor is evoked in the entrepreneur through such writings as *Search for Excellence*, and *American Spirit: Visions of a New Corporate Culture*. These ideals are being absorbed personally by the large numbers of youth in college studying business administration.

Quite clearly a conflict of paradigms concerned with our stress of reality and of value is taking place. So far we exist on the margins participating extensively in neither the one or the other. We like to think that this conflict is either not serious or that it is no concern of ours. The proposal presented here is that we are not simply in a critical situation but that christians are radically involved in the context that has brought on this situation. Both our present and our future are being determined by the response or lack of response that we are making.

That this change is of such ultimate concern can be observed in the functioning of our international political institutions. In 1982 the United Nations, recognizing the overwhelming human threat to the functioning of the natural world and the impending disaster for the human community, itself established the *World Charter for Nature*, a

document that should have originated from the church or from the christian community since it was a highly moral statement. In 1980 in allegiance with the International Union for Conservation and Natural Resources and the World Wildlife Fund, the United Nations Environmental Program set up a program for Third World activities entitled *A Strategy for Conservation and Development*. This was further developed in the program entitled *Sustaining Tomorrow: A Strategy for World Conservation and Development* (1984). An annual publication, *The State of the World* edited by Lester Brown, was begun by the worldwatch Institute in 1984.

This list could be continued indefinitely. Indeed there are few issues that are so pervasive, about which so much is being published, or that is so likely to be a determining issue in the future destinies of the human community than this issue of human-earth relations. Beyond the political and economic are the medical, legal, educational, and moral issues.

The clearest summary of our situation could possibly be the following three statements: In the twentieth century the glory of the Human has become the desolation of the Earth. The Desolation of the Earth is



becoming the Destiny of the Human. All human institutions, professions, programs or activities can be judged by the extent to which they foster, ignore, or inhibit a mutually enhancing human-earth relationship.

This brings us to the Province of St. Paul of the Cross in the year 1986. In reply to the norm of judgment suggested above we might say

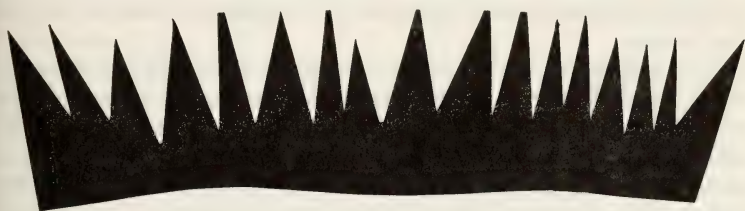
that our Passionist norm of judgment is the extent to which we preach the Passion and bring about a spiritual transformation in the lives of the people to whom we address ourselves.

Where do we begin? With the historical situation of a threatened planet and the consequences of its further degradation? Or do we begin with the Passion and preach a salvific experience with minimal reference to such urgency as is presented here? So far we have followed this latter program with a certain limited success, although the larger horizon of our development as a province indicates a continuing decline in numbers, additional stress on our resources, and the need to bring in lay personnel to take over assignments that we can no longer carry out with our own personnel. We are an aging community. That we can survive into the future seems probable but with severely diminished activities. We are obviously not presenting ourselves as a functionally effective community engaged in the exciting tasks of our times.

We should ask ourselves if we might not rethink our role in accord with the manner in which Paul of the Cross originally invented a Passionist role in 18th century Italy. Paul did indeed have the Capuchin background for establishing a liturgy and horarium and a style of life; but the central focus of his work he took from the urgencies of the human situation in which he found himself. He lived in a premodern peasant world of believing Catholics in need of recapturing the redemptive experience in its intimate spiritual realization. The peasantry from long neglect were becoming alienated from the sacraments and from the practise of interior prayer which Paul saw was best done through the mysteries of redemptive suffering. He formed a community dedicated to a personal living of these mysteries and to communicating these mysteries to the people.

Despite the vagaries of history, the revolutionary wars of the late 18th and throughout the 19th centuries, the change of status of the church in most countries of the western world, and despite the challenge of a secular industrial society the congregation flourished, especially in America, until the 1960's. Then our "consolidation" began—a word that is both ambivalent and foreboding in its implications. Everything from our financial status to our life style and our ministry has been changed; but not in accord with the newly emerging paradigm of an integral earth community.

We like to emphasize that our memory of the Passion and our preaching remain substantially the same. We cling to this in a fixated manner as to our identity. We do not, however, do what Paul of the Cross did originally or what Clement or Augustine or Thomas or Ignatius did. In each instance these men confronted a historical situation and answered in terms that were relevant to the situation, although the terms also carried a continuity with tradition. In every case they confronted an opposed world with which they were intimately acquainted. In every case also they turned the situation to one



of mutual enhancement and thereby produced a new creative period of history. So we notice in Clement; with his extraordinary competence in Hellenic thought. Augustine, likewise, absorbed the Neoplatonism of his times into his powerful historical vision. So Thomas with Aristotle. So Ignatius with the new humanistic learning of the 16th century. All these absorbed vigorous traditions outside of and generally considered opposed to christian belief and through this process evoked new energies throughout the society.

We have in the church presently no parallel with such masterful re-orientations of christian vision. Nor did the Second Vatican Council, with all its emphasis on *aggiornamento* and on the role of the church in the modern world, come up with any satisfactory interpretation either of the human situation or of the church's own role in these times.

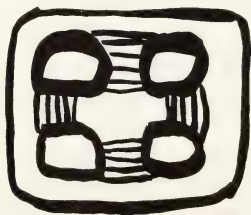
Archbishop Malone in his 1985 Report to the Synod Secretariate entitled "Vatican II and the Postconciliar Era in the U. S. Church" did indicate such a need when he wrote: "The church stands in need

of a new philosophical and conceptual framework—perhaps also a new symbolic and affective system—through which to proclaim the Gospel to the modern world. New instruments must be *developed* for the presentation of authentic Catholic doctrine to all levels and all groups. In this task creativity and fidelity are equally imperative” (Cf, *Origins* Sept. 26, 1985).

A suggestion might be made here that the new conceptual framework must include a new sense of the earth in its essential functioning in the historical context of human affairs, since the basic issue of how the human fits into the integral functioning of the earth is the question before us. This question concerning the nature and destiny of the human is a primary issue for the church in its interpretation of the human venture.

Since neither the church or the christian community has come up with a more effective “philosophical and conceptual framework” others are taking on a leadership role in interpreting the human-earth situation which probably the church and the christian people will accept belatedly. Meanwhile the sense of the church’s leadership in essential matters of the human is being further compromised.

These issues were, of course, not the issues confronting Paul of the Cross when he sought to bring about a new awakening of christian spirituality in a period of alienation from the more significant christian mysteries. Meanwhile, however, a transformation in western so-



ciety has taken place: from peasant and aristocratic society to urban democratic forms; from public institutions explicitly christian to secular establishments; from village economies to great corporate structures; from independent craft manufacturing to enormous and exploitive industries; from small energy systems to vast generators and

nuclear processes; from subsistence farming to agri-business, from a planet integral in its life forms to a planet mutilated in its forms and pervaded with toxic waste.

In this new setting religion could thrive as an alternative spiritual presence offering a trans-earthly salvation while avoiding responsibility for the well-being of the world about us except for some alleviation of human suffering. The industrial process we accepted in uncritical fashion in its devastating consequences. Others with greater sensitivity and perhaps a more integral spirituality have reacted. The industrial process itself became so unsatisfactory that a turn toward spiritual interpretation has taken place from within its own ranks. All those earth movements that were mentioned earlier have emerged out of this context.

As was the case with Rachel Carson, many persons have become aware both of the degradation of the planet that is taking place and the lack of sustaining values in the industrial process itself. This has led to a variety of programs often designated as programs for "Reinhabiting" the various regions of the North American continent, programs to be extended throughout all the various continents. Another term widely used is that of "Regeneration," a term especially used by the Rodale Institute. The transformation process is indicated also by the term "New Alchemy" used by the Institute on Cape Cod. The Chinook Community identifies itself as a new "Learning Center."

As is evident, these terms resonate with the words used to describe spiritual transformation, or spiritual rebirth experience. These movements are frequently quite aware of this continuity with the spiritual past. Often they explicitly associate themselves with such past movements of christian development. This is found, for instance, in the Lindisfarne Association. Also Chinook envisages itself as spiritually akin to Iona in its great period of creativity.

But mainly these groups and their programs emerge out of a new experience of the deeper meaning and the numinous quality of the natural world itself. A pervasive reverence is felt and a new type of human-earth-inter-communion is established. Different from the traditional Zen or Amish or Trappist centers with their fixation on rigorous personal and community discipline and carrying on a fixed tradition, these new movements seek to be as creative in our times as the original Benedictine foundations were in their times, in the Age of the

Monks, as that period is designated between the 8th and the 12th centuries when the medieval world was born. At this time a civilization was created in the limited context of the European continent and then was carried out over the world.

What is here proposed in that these new movements, in their efforts to save the earth from further degradation and to create a more viable mode of human presence within the larger life community of the planet, are carrying out a most significant work, certainly in terms of the integral survival of the planet but possibly also in terms of authentic spiritual activity. This task of building the earth now in its integral spiritual-physical unity can possibly even be identified as the high calling of our times; although, perhaps, the most difficult. It is a greater challenge than that of Clement, Augustine, Thomas or Ignatius.

This task may even be the singular task of our times, a task to which every human is called of whatever age, nation, belief, or life

*Both our present and our future
are being determined by the response
or lack of response that we are making.*

condition. When the lifeboat is in danger its safety becomes the foremost responsibility of everyone in the lifeboat; since no other task, whether distributing the food or tending the ill can be of lasting value if the vessel does not remain afloat.

If all this be so, then at least one of the most significant questions for the Passionist Congregation becomes the question of our role in this phase of the human venture, the earth venture, the christian venture. If we find our proper role we may ourselves be renewed while we participate in earth renewal. On the other hand one sure way in which to decline as a significant presence in the larger community is to remain fixated on ourselves in a detached stance unable to participate in the renewal of the earth as the distinctive challenge of our generation.

We might even be failing to understand the historical reality of the Passion as this is presently taking place. For the Passion of the Gospels and the Passion of the Human has now been extended to the Passion of the Earth. If this last phase of the passion is not presently a redemptive but a disintegrating and uninterpreted process this may be the result of our own attitude. For we have neglected the earth in itself as well as in its revelatory role; we have, it seems, accepted a plundering industrial process that has defaced the divine manifestation in the natural world; we have also alienated ourselves from present efforts to renew the earth.

In a continuing pride in our spiritual nature we have so far had difficulty accepting our role with the single earth community. Our attitude marks the human as alien to the earth, as an intrusion or an addenda to the earth community rather than its most intimate member whose destiny is inseparable from the destiny of the community.

In this context we cannot wonder that we remain unavailable to a large number of highly motivated persons who have identified their life work as the comprehensive task of defending and renewing the earth, enabling this divine manifestation to continue in its earthly expression, and providing the human with a sustaining habitat.

If we could envisage our own work as that of interpreting and alleviating the present Passion of the Earth we might begin to see that a new phase of the Christ Passion has begun. A Passion, however that must soon lead to a renewal of the earth if we are not to release the earth further into an irreversible destruction. Already species are being extinguished on an awesome scale. Already we are giving the earth over to our children and to all future generations in a degraded condition, much of which is beyond remedy.

We might then begin to speak to the issue as Clement dealt with Hellenism, as Augustine set Christianity on its long historical journey, as Thomas illumined the faith with Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, as Ignatius used the classical learning of the period in which he lived, as Paul of the Cross tended central Italy in the 18th century. Only our challenge is much more deadly than anything that could be imagined in these prior centuries. Even in the midst of the present assault on the planet we can hardly comprehend what is happening.

The pathos of the present is that a transforming spiritual concern for the earth is needed and we are not providing it in any adequate

manner; although we might ask if we have any future apart from the future of the earth.

All this supposes, of course, that we do have a public mission, a mission that goes beyond personal counseling, gospel homilies, retreat conferences on traditional subjects, sacramental administration and parish ministry. We can indeed limit ourselves to such spiritual activities. Admirable as these may be, however, there are questions to ask concerning the ruined earth that we are handing on to our children.



Rev. Thomas Berry, C.P., a member of St. Paul of the Cross Province, is the Director of the Riverdale Center of Religious Research in New York.



... In the midst of this change, the preacher of the good news, the proclaimer of the kingdom, the memorializer of the contemporary Passion has a special call to explain ... the changes in the Church.

CONTEMPORARY TRENDS IN
PASSIONIST PARISH MISSIONS AND RENEWALS

The Passionist

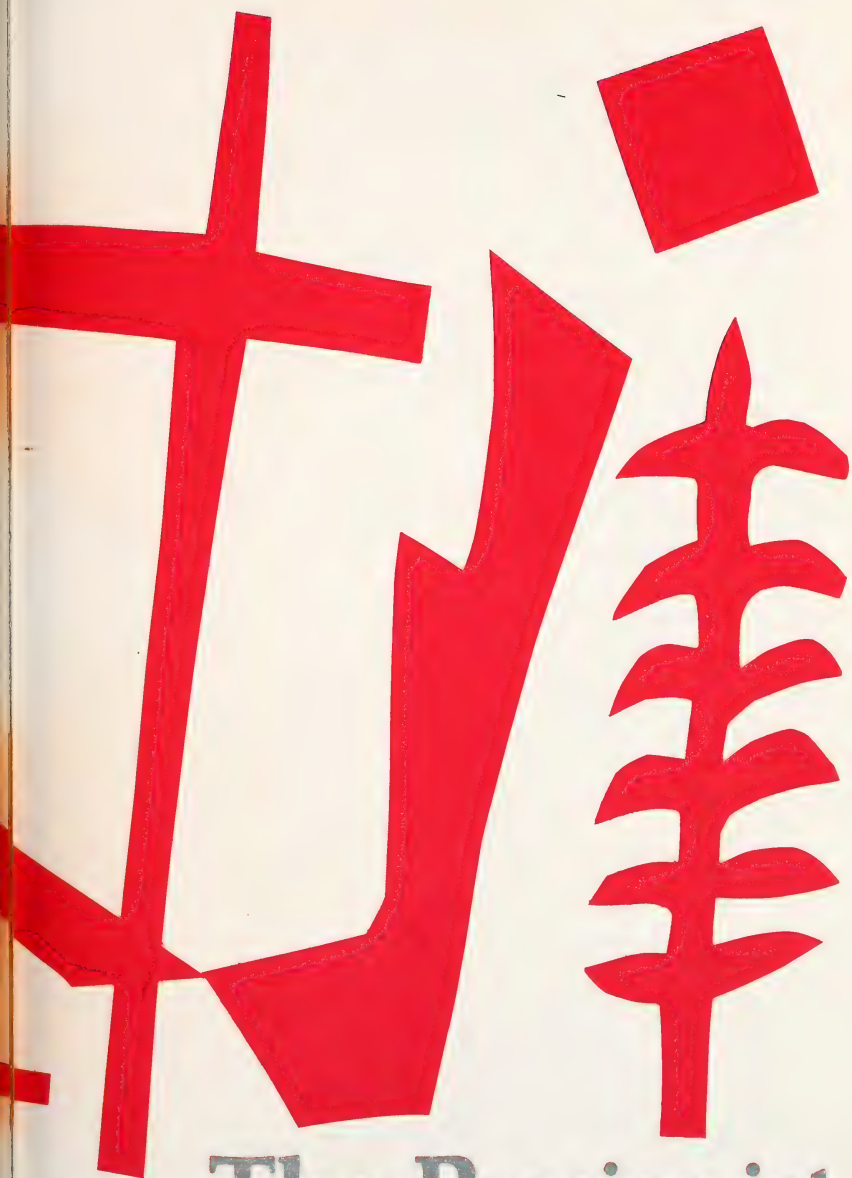


1986

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a review of community life, apostolate and spirituality of the Congregation of the Passion, published for the english-reading world community of Passionists

P. Doyle



The Passionist

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PREFACE

For this issue of *The Passionist* we asked various English speaking Passionist Religious to focus their thinking and to reflect on their experience of the Passion of Jesus'. These articles are akin to the developing corpus of writings being done in women's studies, the place of the feminine in affective spirituality and the expressions of the Passion of Jesus discovered in the oft neglected stories of those marginated, oppressed or forgotten from the past. These writers can find soulmates with those who are trying to reclaim and reinterpret the human story in wholesomely inclusive terms. They also alert us to the Passion-story arising out of action and pastoral practice (orthopraxy) and the exchange of compassion in ministry (orthopathy).

The idea for this issue of *The Passionist* originated in the *Concilium* article of Johann Baptist Metz, "The Future in the Memory of Suffering (76 (1972) 9-25)." Metz begins by stating that the experience of struggle and the moral, political and religious ability to resist oppression are incarnated in those human stories that arise *ex memoria passionis*. The story of suffering has not come from the victors in war nor from those who dominated others. It comes from the stories of the neglected, the victimized and the conquered. The medieval court fool, the black slave singing biblical songs while working the fields, the political prisoner speaking out for human rights in South Africa, Poland and Ireland, the disabled who take the city of Chicago to court to win access to bus transportation and public places, the woman theologian and bible scholar—all these share a solidarity rooted in *memoria passionis*.

An authentic *memoria passionis* expunges the counterfeit remembering found in biased or false stories. For example, we evidence the seductive memory of the "good old days" where everyone knew one's place. We see retired soldiers who remember the comradeship of war and forget the horrors of carnage and the scars that bombs etched in countryside and soil. False memories of the past, even about the historical Passion of Jesus, can drug our present into Holocausts and deprive those who suffer from a hopeful future. The *memoria passionis* emerging in our world can become subversive story. It forces us to reclaim the human story in inclusive terms. It causes us to rethink our

viewpoint about women and men. It challenges us to be free from the idols of dominance and superiority. What is dangerous about this memory is that it elicits respect for the prophetic witness of suffering writ large in the tablet-stories of the forgotten, marginated and vanquished. This *memoria passionis* demands rethinking and reshaping of the human story and the spiritual journey of both genders, each of whom offers distinctive insight into the Passion. Whole societies have been built on the capacity to forget. But the forgotten of the past spin tales that can uncover the treasures our world needs to know and use for a compassionate future.

Each of the articles in this issue of *The Passionist* brings the author's distinctive outlook on the *memoria passionis*. Sister Anna Maria Reynolds, writing from Northern Ireland, brings her scholarship to the Passion of Jesus in the *Showings* of Julian of Norwich. Sister Elissa Rinnere, presently concluding her J.C.D. from Catholic University in Washington, D.C., offers insight on apostolic mindset found in the recently approved male Passionist *Constitutions*. Sisters Alene Perry and Gail Worcelo, living at St. Gabriel Monastery in Clarks Summit, PA., offer words of orthopathy in their reflections on the Passion and nonviolence. Sister Joanne Fahey, ministering in pastoral life in Jamaica, West Indies, presents a viewpoint shaped by her orthopraxis with women and men in that country. All of these writers come from a gender whose human story has been neglected, forgotten or silenced at different points of time. One would wonder how these same topics would be approached by men!

It is a privilege to present this issue of *The Passionist*. Our Editorial Board hopes that it makes some modest contribution to *memoria passionis* being shaped in this kairos of our world and its peoples.

John J. O'Brien, C.P.
Guest Editor

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The Passion in Julian of Norwich

“A simple unlettered creature” — Thus modestly (and inaccurately!) does the author of *Sixteen Revelations of Divine Love* introduce herself in the second chapter of her book. As students of her writings are realizing more and more, however, she was neither simple (except in a purely theological sense) nor unlettered, but a learned woman endowed with a powerful intellect and rare spiritual gifts. In this short article I shall concentrate on what Julian has to say about the Passion of Christ, dealing first with what she actually “saw” and then with some of the insights she was later granted.

Julian of Norwich (Norfolk, England) lived in the fourteenth century, from 1342 until 1416 or later. Very little indeed is known of her apart from the few facts she herself mentions in her writings and references to her in a few contemporary wills and in the contemporary *Book of Margery Kemp*. She was a recluse or anchoress, vowed to a solitary, enclosed life of prayer and contemplation. Her anchorhold was built on to the side of St. Julian’s Church, Norwich. Unfortunately the Church was destroyed early in World War II but it has been reconstructed and a replica of Julian’s cell is now a shrine and place of pilgrimage.

Julian’s writings have come down to us in a short form probably written down immediately after the religious experience they describe, and in a greatly expanded version. This longer version incorporates the fruits of twenty years of prayerful pondering by the anchoress on the original showings. The short text exists in only one

manuscript, the longer in three complete manuscripts; there are also some extracts. None of the manuscripts is in Julian's hand or contemporary with her. The unique short one is usually dated mid-fifteenth century, the oldest of the long texts early-seventeenth century.

From both texts we learn that Julian in her youth had desired from God three special graces:

The first was to have recollection of Christ's Passion. The second was a bodily sickness, and the third was to have, of God's gift, three wounds (125).¹

She adds that she already had a considerable "feeling" for the Passion of Christ, but she wished to have a more intense devotion. She wished that she could have been actually present on Calvary to witness Christ's Passion "which he suffered for me," she adds significantly, so that she in turn could share in his sufferings as did the others who "loved him" and suffered with him on Calvary. So Julian actually *prayed* for "a bodily sight" of Christ in his Passion. The second grace, of a near-mortal bodily sickness, the anchoress desired because she wanted to experience all the pains and pangs of dying as a purification, so that afterwards she would live more entirely for God. The third grace she begged for was to receive three wounds:

the wound of true contrition, the wound of loving compassion, and the wound of longing with my will for God (179).

The first two favours she asked conditionally—if it were God's will; The third she besought urgently and unconditionally. And she adds:

the two desires which I mentioned first passed from my mind, but the third remained there continually (*ibid*).

Julian was in her 31st year when, in May 1373, all three graces were granted to her. She was struck down with what appeared to be a mortal illness during which she received the last rites of the Church; as she lay, more dead than alive, trying to keep her dying gaze fixed on the crucifix which the curate had brought and set before her, she recalled her petition for "the wound of loving compassion" with Christ suffering:

for I wished that his pains might be my pains, with compassion which would lead to longing for God (180).

It was at this point that the showings began, sixteen in all. Fifteen were shown continuously from about 4 O'clock in the morning until 3 O'clock in the afternoon. The sixteenth showing took place on the following night.



The first, second, fourth, fifth, eighth and ninth of these showings were directly concerned with the Passion of Christ. They are described by Julian with great realism using homely concrete images drawn from daily life as well as vivid detail inspired by contemporary stained glass windows and other art forms.

The series began when the dying woman saw the crucifix on which she was gazing come alive, as it were:

Suddenly I saw the red blood running down from under the crown, hot and flowing freely and copiously, a living stream, just as it was at the time when the crown of thorns was pressed on his blessed head (181).

The second showing concentrated on the Sacred Face of Our Lord:

I looked with bodily vision into the face of the crucifix hung before me, in which I saw a part of Christ's Passion: contempt, foul spitting, buffeting, and many long-drawn pains, more than I can tell; and his colour often changed. At one time I saw how half his face, beginning at the ear, became covered with dried blood, until it was caked to the middle of his face, and then the other side was caked in the same fashion (193).

The fourth showing depicted the scourging. Julian tells that, as she gazed,

the fair skin was deeply broken into the tender flesh, though the vicious blows delivered all over the lovely body. The hot blood ran out so plentifully that neither skin nor wounds could be seen, but everything seemed to be blood (199).

In the eighth showing Julian sees Christ almost at the point of death. The picture, though in part derived from medieval paintings and sculptures, is nevertheless intensely personal and poignant:

I saw his sweet face as it were dry and bloodless with the pallor of dying, and then deadly pale, languishing, and then the pallor turning blue, and then the blue turning brown, as death took more hold upon his flesh. For his Passion appeared to me most vividly in his blessed face, and especially in his lips. I saw there what had become of these four colours, which had appeared to me before as fresh and ruddy, vital and beautiful. This was a painful change to watch, this deep dying, and his nose shrivelled and dried up as I saw; and the sweet body turned brown and black (206).

In deep grief Julian beholds the dying Christ, waiting in agony for the moment of his death. But just as she thinks this moment has come, there is a dramatic change. In the ninth vision, she writes:

Suddenly, as I looked at the same cross, he changed to an appearance of joy. The change in his blessed countenance changed mine, and I was as glad and joyful as I could possibly be. And then cheerfully our Lord suggested to my mind: 'Where is now any instant of your pain or of your grief?' And I was very joyful (215).

She was at that instant completely cured of her serious illness.

The corporeal visions described above were the initial answer to Julian's petition for a 'bodily sight' of Christ in his Passion, but as she

prayerfully pondered over them in the years that followed she received precious insights into their significance—insights so enlightening and comforting that she felt an imperious need to share with them all who seek to love God without reserve.

**... ON HIM LIES THE
PUNISHMENT THAT
BRINGS US PEACE,
AND THROUGH HIS
WOUNDS
WE ARE HEALED.**

First and foremost the anchoress learned that Christ had suffered and died *for her personally*. She realized that she could apply to herself with perfect truth the saying of St. Paul: 'He loved ME and delivered himself up for ME' (Gal. 2:20). She writes:

Then our good Lord put a question to me: 'Are you well satisfied that I suffered for you?' I said: 'Yes, good Lord, all my thanks to you; yes, good Lord, blessed may you be.' Then Jesus our good Lord said: 'If you are satisfied, I am satisfied. It is a joy, a bliss, an endless delight to me that ever I suffered my Passion for you; and if I could suffer more, I would suffer more' (216).

Moreover, Julian was taught that all three persons of the Trinity were involved in the mystery of Christ's Passion. In her account of the very first showing she states:

Suddenly the Trinity filled my heart full of the greatest joy, and I understood that it will be so in heaven without end to all who will come there. For the Trinity is God, God is the Trinity. The Trinity is our maker, the Trinity is our protector, the Trinity is our everlasting lover, the Trinity is

our endless joy and our bliss, by our Lord Jesus Christ and in our Lord Jesus Christ. And this was revealed in the first vision and in them all, for where Jesus appears the blessed Trinity is understood, as I saw it (181).

Later, she is even more explicit:

All the Trinity worked in Christ's Passion, administering abundant virtues and plentiful grace to us by him; but only the Virgin's Son suffered, in which all the blessed Trinity rejoice (219).

Man, too, is present 'where Jesus appears,' since for Julian humanity is *comprehended* in the second Person of the Trinity: 'When God looks upon humanity he *sees* the life of Christ,' as Brant Pelphrey expresses it.² In the crucifixion Julian sees God as absolutely at one with humanity, undergoing the worst human suffering at the hands of his fellowmen, while at the same time demonstrating his perfect union with the Father. The anchoress in her account of Christ's sufferings emphasizes the total identity which he assumes with us as creatures. Christ did not escape suffering because he was God — on the contrary, as she puts it:

the union in him of the divinity gave strength to his humanity to suffer more than all men could (213).



She goes on:

And he suffered for the sins of every man who will be saved; and he saw and he sorrowed for every man's sorrow, desolation and anguish, in his compassion and love (213).

Julian saw what Isaiah had foretold centuries before:

And yet ours were the sufferings he bore,
ours the sorrows he carried.
But we, we thought of him as someone punished,
struck by God and brought low.
Yet he was pierced through for our faults,
crushed for our sins.
On him lies the punishment that brings us peace,
And through his wounds we are healed (Is. 53:4-5).

And all this was for love of us, she adds, echoing Philippians 2:6-11:

I saw that the love in him which he has for our souls was so strong that he willingly chose suffering with a great desire, and suffered it meekly with a great joy (214).

Mary, our Mother, suffered with and through her Son. Julian stresses the compassion of Mary and refers to it several times:

for Christ and she were so united in love that the greatness of her love was the cause of the greatness of her pain. For in this I saw a substance of natural love which is developed by grace, which his creatures have for him, and this natural love was most perfectly and surpassingly revealed in his sweet mother; for as much as she loved him more than all others, her pain surpassed that of all others. For always, the higher, the stronger, the sweeter that love is, the more sorrow it is to the lover to see the body which he loved in pain (210).

Later, the anchoress refers again to our Lady in this context:

For as much as our Lady sorrowed for his pains, so much did he suffer sorrow for her sorrows (213).

Julian's visions of Christ's Passion do not, however, end on a note of sorrow but of joy and hope. She writes:

So long as he was capable of suffering, he suffered *for* us and sorrowed *for* us. And now he is risen again and is no longer capable of suffering—and yet he suffers *with* us, as I shall say (214).



As she gazed on the Cross, waiting tensely for the moment when Christ would expire, she experienced the joy of the risen Christ:

Suddenly, as I looked at the same cross, he changed to an appearance of joy. The change in his blessed appearance changed mine, and I was as glad and joyful as I could possibly be. And then cheerfully our Lord suggested to my mind: 'Where is there now any instant of your pain or of your grief? And I was very joyful. I understood that we are now on his cross with him in our pains, and in our sufferings we are dying, and with his help and his grace we willingly endure on that same cross until the last moment of life. Suddenly he will change his appearance for us, and we shall be with him in heaven (215).

This note of joy is underlined by Julian's realization that by his Passion Christ has overcome the Devil, a fact she refers to again and again in her writings:

'With this the fiend is overcome.' Our Lord said this to me with references to his blessed Passion, as he had shown it before. In this he showed a part

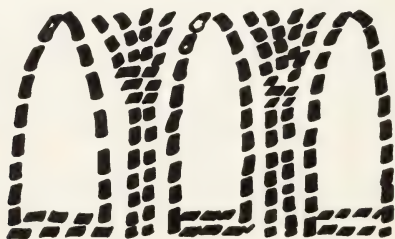
of the fiend's malice, and all his impotence, because he showed that his Passion is the overcoming of the fiend (201).

Towards the end of her book Julian comes back to this saying of our Lord:

. . . just as in the first words which our good Lord revealed, alluding to his blessed Passion: 'With this the fiend is overcome,' just so he said in the last words with perfect fidelity, alluding to us all: 'You will not be overcome.' And all this teaching and true strengthening apply generally to all my fellow-Christians, as is said before, and so is the will of God (315).

The anchoress concludes these comments with a passage which has become justly famous:

And these words: 'You will not be overcome' were said very insistently and strongly, for certainty and strength against every tribulation which may come. He did not say: 'You will not be troubled, you will not be belaboured, you will not be disquieted,' but he said: 'You will not be OVER-COME.' God wants us to pay attention to these words, and always to be strong in faithful trust, in well-being and in woe, for he loves us and delights in us, and so he wishes us to love him and delight in him, and all will be well (315).



And so the showings ended.

Practical woman that Julian was, and full of healthy curiosity, from the very first moment of reflection she kept asking what was our Lord's 'meaning' in making these revelations to her. Christ himself

eventually answered her query. The anchoress relates the explanation she was given in an immortal passage which brings her book of revelations to a close:

And fifteen years after and more, I was answered in spiritual understanding, and it was said: 'What, do you wish to know your Lord's meaning in this thing? Know it well. *Love* was his meaning. Who reveals it to you? Love. What did he reveal to you? Love. Why does he reveal it to you? For Love. Remain in this and you will know more of the same. But you will never know different, without end.'

So, Julian concludes:

I was taught that Love is our Lord's meaning. And I saw very very certainly in this and in everything that before God made us he loved us () which love was never abated and never will be. And in this love he has done all his works, and in this love he has made all things profitable to us, and in this love our life is everlasting. In our creation we had beginning, but the love in which he created us was in him from without beginning. In this love we have our beginning, and all this shall we see in God without end (342-3).

NOTES

- 1 *Revelations of Divine Love*; I have used the translation by E. Colledge and James Walsh (London and New York 1978). References are to pages in this edition.
- 2 Brant Pelphrey, *Love Was His Meaning: The Theology and Mysticism of Julian of Norwich*, (Salzburg 1982) p. 166.

Some Thoughts on Apostolate

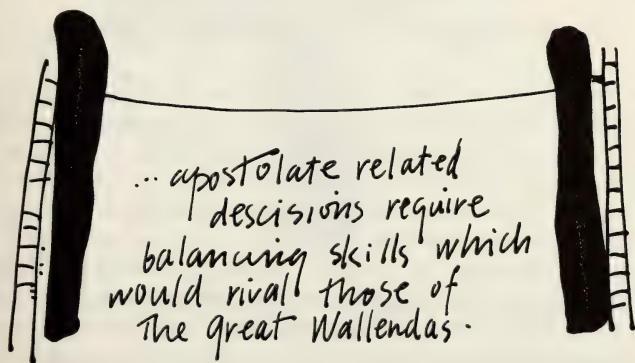
The constitution of a religious institute has a very specific purpose. According to the 1983 Code of Canon Law the constitution records the intention of the founder or foundress in beginning the institute, its nature, purpose, spirit, character and wholesome traditions (c. 578). In addition to these points, which the code calls the *patrimony* of the institute, or its inheritance from the past, the constitutions should also contain fundamental forms of government, norms of membership, formation and incorporation, as well as a definition of the sacred bonds which the members assume (c. 578, §1). In short, the constitution expresses the self understanding of a religious institute. As would be expected, constitutions which have been submitted to and approved by the Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes have met these criteria to the satisfaction of the Church. To the degree that each member had input into the process of formulating the document, the constitution is a collective statement of individual vision and commitment.

The 1984 constitution of the Passionist Congregation, in addition to incorporating the points mentioned, contains many intriguing possibilities for discussion. On the light side, the reader might wonder what particular danger St. Paul of the Cross saw in his followers teaching women to sing hymns (1775 Rule, Chapter XXIV, section III). On a different note, St. Paul deserves much admiration for his understanding, in 1775, of the importance of relaxation in spiritual development and effective apostolic activity.

In addition to these two points, I must confess a fair amount of fascination with the careful and consistent "gendêr" language of the 1984 constitution. The members of the congregation are, of course, male. But God is also male. We know that the first gender designation is correct and the second is not. In contrast, the church is consistently referred to as feminine, as is the Passionist Congregation. Puzzling.

Although pursual of any of these topics might have been interesting, I chose rather to look at a topic which is of particular interest today both to members of religious institutes and to the whole Church. That topic is apostolate.

For religious, a constitution describes the corporate or congregational apostolate. That description must then be applied to particular circumstances. In the wider Church there are theological and canonical principles which describe the apostolates of both clergy and laity, but these are coming under difficult scrutiny and questioning because of actual practice. One need go no farther than current issues of the *National Catholic Reporter* to see proof of this.¹



These brief reflections will consider the topic of religious apostolate from three perspectives; the 1983 Code of Canon Law, the 1984 constitution of the Passionist Congregation, and the apostolate of religious in light of what seem to be pressing needs of the Church today.

Religious can look to the 1983 code for a certain kind of direction in stating and then evaluating their corporate and individual apostolates. Canons 673 to 683 comprise a new section of law for the code, and one that has its roots in the conciliar documents, primarily *Perfectae caritatis* 7, 8, 10, and 20, and *Christus Dominus* 35. The council called for each institute to declare its own character, and then following from that definition, to state its corporate mission or apostolate. The principle is sound but appears, deceptively, to be simple. In reality, apostolate related decisions require balancing skills which would rival those of The Great Wallendas.

The nature of the institute gives the major direction. Therefore, self definition is as crucial to the group as it is to the vitality of each individual in the group. But balance must be sought between the needs of the group and the needs of individuals; between the corporate mission and the mission of the church, local or otherwise; between common life and the demands of the apostolate. The purpose of these points of balance is, of course, the protection of and respect for personal and corporate charisms, those gifts of the Spirit which inspire and direct activity to benefit the people of God.²

The 1983 Code of Canon Law on Apostolate of Religious

The 1983 Code of Canon Law lays down the principles of these charism-protecting balancing points. The first apostolate of religious is the witness given through their consecrated lives (c. 673). Accepting this basic point, further determination of any specific apostolate is made in light of the nature of the institute. Members of those institutes totally given to contemplation are not to be summoned to assist with pastoral ministry.³ In contrast, members of institutes dedicated to works of the apostolate have apostolic involvement as an integral part of their commitment. This involvement has certain characteristics: it proceeds from union with God, it confirms and fosters that union, and it is carried out in communion with the Church and in virtue of a mandate (c. 675). The canon establishes a norm, at least, that the apostolic activity of religious is ecclesial in nature, and that it is carried out in relationship to the Church.⁴ Religious are to maintain the mission and works proper to them and also accommodate the needs of times and places in which they find themselves (c. 677). Also,

they must be mindful of the diocese in which they work. In their apostolates religious are subject to the local bishop as well as to their own superiors. This dual authority over the activity of religious calls for dialogue between bishops and institutes, as canon 678 emphasizes. The remainder of the canons on apostolate (cc. 679-683) present issues which again and again reinforce this need for dialogue to ensure that the relationship between a diocese and the religious working within it is mutually beneficial.⁵



The 1984 Passionist Constitution on Apostolate

The 1984 constitution of the Passionist Congregation takes these principles and applies them specifically to the Passionist context. The corporate apostolate is "to keep constantly alive in the hearts of the faithful the memory of the Passion . . ." (#62). The goal of the apostolate is to guide the faithful to an understanding of the Paschal Mystery which will, in turn, result in a closer relationship to God, to self and to neighbor (see #65). The constitution presents and then repeats a clear

corporate preference that this apostolate is exercised in service to the poor and neglected (see #3, 13, 57, and 70). This foundation of identity and resulting corporate apostolate are like the poles and ropes which master balancers must then use to make their journey across an arena.

The gifts and talents of each individual are to be recognized and encouraged and made use of as the congregation carries out its mission (#68). This would indicate that individuals are not indiscriminately moved from one work to another with no regard for their abilities or preferences, yet consideration must be given to the needs of the corporate mission. This balance between individual and group is delicate indeed!

The congregation is not isolated from the local church within which it ministers. Willingness to offer assistance, however, must be in some relationship to the character of the congregation and the specifically Passionist mission (#73). This must hold true in dealing with a particular diocese or with the "wider world-community" (#69).

Intrinsic to the Passionist vocation is the call to live in community (#25). Choice of apostolic commitments must allow for membership in a local community and for involvement in its external ministry (#67).⁶ This is another sometimes difficult point of balancing.

As is to be expected, the 1984 constitution of the Passionist congregation has incorporated the apostolate related principles found in the 1983 code and presents them with admirable clarity and completeness. Although such a presentation is a vital and necessary part of any constitution, what is its usefulness in light of some of today's pressing ecclesial issues?

Current Issues

It seems correct to observe that although the principles are in place, actual practice related to apostolate is often shaped and determined by forces outside a religious institute and, in many instances, even outside the structure of the Church.

For instance, faced with a critical lack of personnel, how free are superiors of any institute to follow the theory and to find the *proper* balance between corporate needs, individual needs and the needs of a local church? Or, faced with severe financial constraints, how free is the leadership of any institute to determine its apostolic commitments

on the basis of founding mission? As an example, particularly in institutes of women, it is becoming increasingly difficult to have a majority of members employed in church sponsored positions for which remuneration is a stipend rather than a salary commensurate with the individual's education and experience. The increased income available from "secular" employment is needed for the maintenance of the group. Does the principle that the apostolic action of religious is carried out in communion with the Church and under its mandate present a dilemma in such a circumstance, or a possibility? How broadly

What steps can be taken to ensure that the decreasing presence of religious in the Church can be completed by an increasing capability on the part of the laity to assume some degree of spiritual self-direction and independence.

can "Church-related" be understood and still have meaning? What are the implications for an institute if its members engage more and more in works not associated with the Church? This is not to imply that even in the best of times apostolate related decisions are easily made, but only to bring to light the complexity of situations presently facing religious institutes.

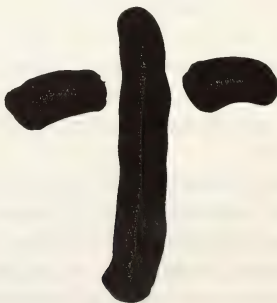
These very difficult questions with which religious institutes are grappling have another side which also generates significant heat and light. As the numbers of religious steadily decrease, as they withdraw from long-held apostolic works or, in response to financial constraints, as religious move into "secular" employment, what is the im-

pact of the lay members of the Church to whom the former apostolic works were directed? What steps can be taken to ensure that the decreasing presence of religious in the Church can be complemented by an increasing capability on the part of the laity to assume some degree of spiritual self-direction and independence.⁷ According to the needs of his own time, St. Paul of the Cross saw the value of enabling laity to assume roles not always accepted as belonging to them. He encouraged his followers to teach the people to develop their own prayer lives "and at the same time lay open and refute the pernicious error of some who imagine that meditation on divine things is an employment proper only for Religious and Clergy" (1775 Rule, Chapter XXIII).

The laity of today's and tomorrow's church do not need the same type of spiritual care that may have been needed in the past. The present need is for spiritual *enablers* who can generate within the laity the insight and ability to be of spiritual assistance to themselves and to others. This concern for the enablement of the laity must be part of the apostolate of every religious. The motivating factor for such a thrust in apostolic action is, obviously, the stability of the Church of tomorrow.

Conclusion

Religious are described as the prophetic element of the Church, prodding hierarchy and laity alike to a greater fidelity in accomplishing God's mission. Perhaps part of our prophetic message of today is this view of tomorrow when religious will be few in number and when



most of their activity as spiritual and apostolic leaders will be carried on by laity, if it is to be carried on at all. Perhaps our prophetic message of today should also include acknowledgement of the limitations of theory in the face of present reality and future possibilities, and acknowledgement of a certain helplessness when confronted with circumstances and influences beyond our control. Also, the message should probably contain some mention of the strength to be found in trusting in God when the vision of the future is somewhat clouded.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 In its September 1986 issues, *NCR* is running a series of articles on laity in parish work. The ever-increasing involvement of laity in such work raises significant issues about what church work might belong to laity and what belongs to clergy, and why.
- 2 A very interesting study of this idea is found in Williamson, Enid, O.S.M., "The Notion of Charism in Religious Life," *Studia Canonica* 19 (1985) 99-114.
- 3 It is interesting to note that this canon restricts the calling of contemplative religious to works of pastoral *ministry*. This word is used only in a very restricted sense in the code as a designation for clerical activity. By implication, the safeguard provided in the canon applies to priest members of totally contemplative institutes.
- 4 Richard Hill, S.J., "The Apostolate of Institutes," in *A Handbook on Canons* 573-746, Jordan Hite, Sharon Holland, and Daniel Ward, eds. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1985) pp. 202-203, mentions different ways of looking at the canon's call for a mandate, and therefore different ways of looking at the apostolate's relationship to the Church. The underlying question is, of course, how to view the work of those religious who engage in "secular" rather than "ecclesial" employments.
- 5 For some comment on these canons and discussion on the role of dialogue between bishops and religious as a mutual help in discerning charisms both of service and leadership, see my article "Dialogue Between Bishops and Religious," *Review for Religious* 46 (1986) 368-375.

- 6 The "external ministry" of the community is presumably one of witness, but this does not seem to be specifically explained in the constitution.
- 7 This decrease in the presence of lay and clerical religious is, of course, accompanied by decreasing numbers of secular clergy. This separate topic would demand much more consideration than can easily fit into this brief article.

SISTER ALENE PERRY, C.P.
SISTER GAIL WORCELO, C.P.

From Non-Violence to Violence and Back. . . .

Lord God, gifts without measure flow from your goodness to bring us your peace. Our life is your gift. Guide our life's journey, for only your love makes us whole. Keep us strong in your love.

Prayer, 18th Sunday, Ordinary Time

The journey image is powerful because we can see it so well, so clearly and so often in our lives. We journey through life, into life and within life and we journey on all levels of our being. The journeys within seem to me the most fascinating; within life, ourselves and the ideas and experiences that shape us. These few pages review one theme, one such journey grappling with the perception of violence. It's a journey of ordinary occurrences. Ordinary time, kairos time, is what we deal with day by day. It is only in reviewing and reflecting that we can see the giftedness of the ordinary.

In 1932 our country was still deep in the grip of what has come to be known as the Great Depression. My family was certainly still within that experience. My father had lost the corner grocery store he had started with high hopes in the late 1920's. He worked now at whatever he could find whenever he could find it.

My mother's experience was of flight, to escape the pressures of creditors and bill collectors, who were themselves only trying to support their families. A fourth child could not have been what my parents most wanted on a practical level.

A few years ago I was following a guided meditation. The leader took the listeners back in time; back through all the earlier phases of growing-up, back indeed into the womb. When the leader reached that point and paused, I was suddenly and completely overwhelmed by a sense of free floating anxiety. I thought, "That's exactly how it must have been for them." The sense of panic, of fear, of being trapped nearly suffocated me for a flashing moment. Yet, because they lived with the very ordinary faith and courage of all good people, I was welcomed.

These dust bowl, Okie, Al Capone times were not perceived as violent.

In 1943 my young heart was bursting with pride as I stood in the downtown 5 and 10¢ store. My mother was letting me pick out the service flag we would hang in the front window. I can see it now with the blue star, an anchor and a bit of gold braid across the top going down the sides to form tassels at the end.

*It is only in reviewing
and reflecting that we
can see the giftedness
of the ordinary.*

Like everyone else we followed the news, looking at the maps on the front page of the newspaper every day. Our generation grew up conscious of war yet not really knowing. We saw some of those blue stars turn to silver or gold; unless it was the flag in our own window tragedy was still not too real. This war was good, just and salvific. John Wayne never played a Jew being sent to Auschwitz.

The world was not perceived as violent.

My brother came home and I entered high school . . . peacetime . . . the Truman and Eisenhower years . . . we had dropped the

Bomb and I for one was totally unaware. My parents, my teachers, my classmates — none of us raised our voice, none had any questions, none among us had insight enough to fear or to be awed or to seek a new vision.

The economy see-sawed through the close of the 40's until finally the Korean war brought about enough business to quiet things down. The military-industrial marriage steadied and has remained terrifyingly faithful. High school years are chaotic by nature but these years also reflected the fits and starts and heaving of a nation, a world, an era beginning to sway as if rocked from deep, deep within itself.

But still, the world and its people were not perceived as violent.

Looking back, the 30's, the 40's and the 50's seem so serene. There was something, either present or absent, that gives an aura of calmness to that period. A sense of purposeful, peaceful living. The music was mostly romantic, the movies fell into expected categories with happy endings and John Wayne always rode tall and got the girl. A few faint voices might have tried to break through, but who heard? The unconsciousness seems not a deliberate covering over as the unawakened stage before maturity. We were not yet aware.

In 1958 I entered the monastery. John Kennedy's assassination a few years later barely entered. Civil rights were not an issue for us nor were we feminists. The deaths of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. were an abrupt awakening to the awareness of violence present in our society.

1968 — and I was one of those who volunteered to go to the Philippines; three of us were chosen to begin the foundation that is now in



Marbel. The country and its society seemed charged with life and vitality, full of color and quirks. Manila traffic was second to none in its hair-raising pace. There was full freedom of speech and what struck me as a rather flamboyant approach to politics.

Overnight, literally overnight, the character of Philippine society changed. We woke up on the morning of Sept. 21, 1971 to a totally new order of things. It was an eerie day I shall never forget. We could only get one station on the radio, all newspapers had been closed, rumors abounded. The announcers read the presidential decree proclaiming martial law all day and all night. Interspersed was the report of the attack on Enrile's car, which even then was rumored to have been staged. (Amazingly, he has now admitted that.) The only song played was the new, never before heard Philippine "national anthem." That song was like the coup de grace to a people's heart on a bleak day in their history.

We grew to be able to taste and smell and touch the fear of our neighbors. Truly, the fear was palpable. There was no escaping the pervasiveness of fear, we were part and parcel of the neighborhood where we had built Our Lady of Hope. There was violence in that fear.

Can you imagine living in a small town and seeing young men walking the streets dressed for combat? They carried an M16 rifle with bands of live ammunition criss-crossed on their chest, hand grenades hanging from their belts, along with a combat knife and bayonet. Can you imagine the power they must have felt, the confusion about their role and place in their own culture. These boys, off the street corners of Manila and Cebu and other towns and cities had been set over their own people to intimidate, to guard, sometimes to harass.

At night, almost every night, we would hear those M16's. The rifle has a strange, deep, guttural sound. To me, an obscene sound. It is an automatic rifle and shoots, not one bullet at a time as at a deer, but a round of ammunition, a burst of deep, obscene sound. Then silence and a sense of waiting. There is no ambulance in such a small town, no sirens, only the silence.

These episodes of the night would not be caused by ideology, it was more likely a girl, a bet, a drink; the down to earth things that kill people.

I began to reflect on violence.

It was the 1970's now. The waves of change, of doubt, of indecision sweeping over the world, the Church and religious life were inescapable even in southern Mindanao. Life was too complicated, too puzzling for me to be able to seek answers calmly and objectively. Alone in my thinking and with no sense of direction I read all I could find of Holocaust literature, and began to comprehend the tremendous significance of that event in our history.

I went from the perception of living in a non-violent world to the experience of living in fear filled tension. Not always my fear, but immersed in the knowledge and experience of society pervaded by reasonable fears. I struggled in my reflections on all this, I wanted to understand, to hope, to find faith and meaning.



I was not drawn to study or do research. I live a life of prayer, reflecting on what I see and come to know through the connections discovered in prayer. My conviction is that as I begin to see so also shall

the human family gain insight; that if I understand some portion of truth, the human family is enlightened. A later addition to that conviction is that as I discover and accept my feelings so also will the human family be enabled to reach its peacemaking potential.

My journey has been the ordinary one for my peer group, albeit a reflective journey. We and our parents before us did not perceive the violence of society, left out the consideration of violence and were, then, unprepared for the issues that sprang at society in the 60's and 70's.

It was difficult for me, from a distance, to grasp the meaning of these issues. These were the days of rioting in many of our cities, including my hometown, the days of the Watergate scandal in our government and the rise of the feminist movement.

My experience of violence in the martial law situation is all too familiar to many, many men, women and children throughout the world. It is intense and often physical. But that is not ordinarily our common experience. Here, in this country, in religious life, the violence we suffer and inflict is more often relational.

Let me share with you the moment I came to understand the why and what of the feminist issue. I was in a hospital in Manila. A priest came to visit. I can recall every detail vividly and have always smiled because the earthy quality grounds it in ordinary time.

My room was enormous. The one bed was against a wall, on the opposite wall was the door leading into the bathroom. Sometime previous to my visitor's arrival I had used the toilet. When he arrived, my visitor, an American, asked if he could use that same facility. I said, "Of course."

When he came back into the room he said, "The toilet was running. Now, in order to stop the water running you can try to jiggle the handle and if that doesn't work, take the top off the tank and . . ."

At first I thought he was kidding, so I nodded wide-eyed, as if fascinated. Then I realized that he was absolutely in earnest about instructing me about this.

I knew about jiggling the handle and I even knew about lifting the top off the back and bouncing the bulb. I'm no plumber, but I had learned all that before ever leaving home. As I listened to the seriousness in his voice I said to myself in amazement, "He would never go through all this if I were a man." Then I understood: "This is what the feminist thing is all about."

He never asked me if I knew the toilet was running; he assumed I did. He never asked me if I knew any procedures to stop the running toilet; he assumed I did not. It did not register with him that I was an adult and had lived in varied circumstances through the years. He assumed I needed this instruction.

The violence in this is ordinary, a relational put-down on both sides; mine the more conscious as I mocked his seriousness. It really does not matter whether or not this person might have said the same thing to another man. It really does matter that we begin to see and understand the harm that can be done in such an exchange. The moment lighted up, for me, the abstract "feminist thing" and I began to see its impact on my life, values and attitudes.

This reflection continues to unfold. Without becoming a rabid feminist, I understand to some extent the need for societal changes, the anger of some, the deep sorrow in others, toward existing structures and attitudes and am continually growing in sensitivity to these. All of this from an ordinary life situation and conversation.

I continued to read, to pray, to understand connections. Reviewing our years is a path to healing and wholeness. I've only mentioned some years, some events, some persons, leaving out a huge number from my life and perhaps all that have been significant in your life and journey. The image of the mushroom shaped cloud became more pervasive and holocaust took on a broader meaning.

After I had returned to the States the whole gamut of peace making and pro life issues coalesced, and through providential means unsought, I began to meet other people with the same thoughts and hopes and dreams for peace.

The world, full of violence, is a place for peace.

Since that time, through the 70's and 80's, I have learned to see violence in all of creation, violence that must be present as creation unfolds, violence that must be brought to transformation.

We were born of a violent moment of creation that is still echoing through the cosmos. I have listened with eagerness to the words of Fr. Tom Berry, absorbing some of his vision, realizing the alienation we suffer from our cosmic "roots." It is a realization not of negativity and fear but mind and heart expanding, one of bonding with the other parts of creation with whom and with which we truly "share space."

We are violently ejected from our mother's womb and that moment of original trauma affects us in ways only now being investigated, but sensed from the most primitive eras.

The contemporary need we have to find, acknowledge and deal with our feelings appropriately has to do with the development of peace and truth and justice as operative drives for the human family, as human and as family. The lessons of recent history lay this need on us as an imperative.

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VIOLENCE THAT
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AS CREATION
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TO TRANSFORMATION.**

We can call it psychological development, we can call it making community, we can call it being saints; whatever we call it the movement toward wholeness and healing must be our next great human achievement. As the Pax Christi motto has it, "Violence ends where love begins."

Violence is part of our present reality. We acknowledge its existence but there is no need to be overwhelmed by that one part of reality. I cannot see a guarantee for the future in the same way I did in

earlier years. We are a people and a world at risk, yet hope does rise from the faith given us. What life shall be and what death shall come are mysteries to me. A mystery based on the full cycle we are familiar with: there is life, there is death, there is New Life.

We have journeyed from a common perception of non-violence to the experience of living in a violent world. I have spent most of my life recording violent times and activities in my consciousness without even perceiving the violence. Now is a time of conversion so that what has been recorded can be disarmed and redeemed.

Many of my contemporaries are still living in our recently acquired perception of a violent world. That level of awareness pervades our present political and economic policies. The ultimate place of violence, however, is the only human heart that is mine, the ultimate place and the only place to make a start.

I felt I had to put my name on the line somewhere as a committed advocate of peace. In my 25th year of Passionist profession I privately took the Pax Christ Vow of Non-Violence. I believe it is a religious act, has a grace and a power to effect the change it envisions for the person and for the world. Like our evangelical vows, the power is channeled through a most imperfect human instrument and the change is imperceptible for the most part. My consciousness always needs to be sensitized to the violence in my mind, heart and actions.

This has been a journey of grace, of the love of God reaching into, shaping my life to see, to know and to return the knowledge of love back into the world, into the cosmos.

The great insight that held Paul of the Cross to Passion prayer and ministry was his acknowledgement of God's love impelling Christ to live, to love, to die, to rise; to journey from life through death to New Life. This same love flows through ordinary time and events and people. It has flowed through my life and times in wondrous ways bringing hope and meaning to each step of the human journey.

As we journey in a world of no guarantees toward a fulfillment known only to faith, we can say, sing, trust in the words our founder desired we say every day, several times a day: "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bend in the heavens, on the earth and under the earth and every tongue proclaim to the glory of God, JESUS CHRIST IS LORD."

(Sr.) Alene Perry, C.P.

A few years ago, I came across an article and poem by the Vietnamese Buddhist monk and poet, Thich Nhat Hanh, entitled *Nonviolence: Practicing Awareness* which began with the poem "Please Call Me By My True Names." I held the poem within for a long time and allowed it to expand, somewhat like yeast in the dough. The poem is about three persons: the first, a twelve year old girl, one of the boat people crossing the Gulf of Thailand, raped by a sea pirate, an act which forced her to jump into the ocean; the second is the sea pirate, born in a remote village in Thailand; and the third person is the reader. I quote the poem in part:

Do not say that I'll depart
tomorrow because even today I still
arrive.

I still arrive, in order to laugh and
to cry, in order to fear and to hope,
the rhythm of my heart is the birth
and death of all that are alive.

I am the child in Uganda, all skin
and bones, my legs as thin as
bamboo sticks.

I am also the merchant of arms
selling deadly weapons to Uganda.

I am the twelve year old girl, refugee on
a small boat, who throws herself
into the ocean after being raped by
a sea pirate.

I am also the sea pirate, my heart not
yet capable of seeing and loving.

Please call me by my true names so
that I can hear at the same time all
my cries and my laughs, so that I
could see that my joy and pain are
but one.

Please call me by my true names so
that I could become awake, so that
the door of my heart be left open,
the door of Compassion.



I would like to use this poem as the basis for my reflection because I go through these stages again and again, in a cyclical rhythm of pain, despair and hope. My thoughts on nonviolence are situated in the context of each of the three participants of the poem.

As a woman of the Church, of the earth, and of the 20th century, I have experienced those destructive forces which oppress, ravish and rob the very heart of life. This has come to me in the pain of other women whose lives have been broken and shattered and stripped of all dignity and worth, through the violence which is being done to the planet, in discriminating attitudes which strike at my womanhood, and in the cries and laments of the human community. In this I share in the suffering of the twelve year old girl.

As a human being, who is part of a wider community, as a consumer of limited resources and as one whose nature is marked by sin and greed, I am one with the destructive action of the sea pirate.

Finally, I am the person who reflects deeply upon life events. I am forever being swept into a paschal experience of powerlessness, despair, death and new life. I cling to hope and peace, and in this I reflect the mind and heart of the reader.

I can push my memory as far back as 1963, being six years old at the time, to recall the first national violent event to touch my consciousness. This was the assassination of President John F. Kennedy followed shortly by the murder of Lee Harvey Oswald, his assassin. What impressed me at the time was a terrific sense of pain on the part of many people outside my immediate realm of existence, a mood of collective grieving as it were. I remember the shocked and tearful faces which filled the television screen. There was Caroline, a girl my own age, caught up in the confusion and anxiety of a nation, the turmoil of her family and the loss of her own father taken away so violently. Poor Caroline, already brutalized! I looked across the room at my own father, wondering what it would be like to lose him to a bullet? The waves of fear, shock and uncertainty began to flow then, but also the underpinnings of a commitment to choose life at all costs.

Sympathy and compassion came to be born from the events of those days. My mind began to fill in what the press had failed to report on the person of Lee Harvey Oswald. I was overwhelmed with a pity for this man whose life was taken from him as violently as he had taken life. I wept but did not know why. Perhaps that event violated us all?

Years later I reflect on the fact that the violence, anger, estrangement and rage of the Kennedy assassination was but a manifestation of the disunity already seething within our own hearts. It seems there is only one thing to do and that is to turn inward and destroy in ourselves all that we think we ought to destroy in others. This is such a slow and painful process and there isn't any neat plan we can receive from another in how to go about this work. Other people are just as uncertain and weak in trying to root out the violence within themselves. We are always thrown back upon our own resources and the only responsibility we can shoulder in this work is responsibility for ourselves.

In 1968 I was the twelve year old girl growing up on the streets of Brooklyn. I had my share of sea pirates too. It was the year of the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, Vietnam, and racial riots. The neighborhood in which I grew up was a microcosm of the nation and world. It had its own stories, rituals, seasons and distinctive characteristics. There was the corner grocery store owned by an old German family, honest, hard working people who

served our street for 25 years until they were forced out by the mob. The people in the neighborhood were tightly knit, simple folk going about the business of life. As a child that's all there was . . . life and occasional death. There was a man who lived on the ground floor who would sit at his window all day long, weaving stories and chewing tobacco. We would make it a point to wander by and listen to his tales. We called him The Old Man as no one knew his name. He came to be our arbiter because his stories were of peace and justice as he settled our petty arguments and fights. One day he did not appear at his window and from then on we carried along his work as keeper of peace. When disputes arose we would recall the stories of The Old Man, his presence lingered in the words and a certain calm always fell upon us. I carry a part of him within today as I gaze from the windows of my own eyes trying to discern the truthful solution to the complexities round about.

Life is difficult, it is true, even for a child in the local community it is a struggle from minute to minute. But the struggle itself is so thrilling and activates many possibilities for mature growth in peace and self giving. I reflect on how the world is very much within the contemplative community of women in which I live. Community is the best arena for the struggle towards a nonviolent way of being. We may think of ourselves as nonviolent people, but living in community shatters all those illusions about our nonviolence. Community, in whatever form, is the greatest place of challenge. It pulls and pushes us into a self transformation we could not accomplish on our own. It is the place where we learn what we have to do to become nonviolent.

Again I go back in memory to that summer of '68 just after Martin Luther King was slain when the streets of New York were heavy with racial tension and outbreaks of violence. I wondered why such animosity and hatred existed over the color of one's skin? I had a black friend, Yolanda, whom I made it a point to invite over to the house often enough. The hushed silence and wide eyes stares of the neighbors never ceased. Years later I spent time working in the country of Ghana, West Africa. I was a white woman in an all black milieu. The color of my skin did not matter and I was welcomed into the arms of a hospitable people. One day I visited an old slave castle in the town of Cape Coast, which had been left standing as a memorial to the thousands who were so brutally beaten, stripped and raped of dignity, cul-

ture and homeland. It is one of those dangerous memories we must never allow to die. I stood there with my black friends whose ancestors had been martyred within the castle walls or on the outgoing ocean voyage. We were in front of one of the cells which during the slave trading days held men, women and children like animals packed and confined in slaughterhouse fashion. We held each other, embracing the pain of the past, and wept.

My skin is the color of those who persecuted. Forgive me, Lord, for being part of that violence which was so outright and crude. Have mercy on my pitifully shrunken soul!

Often in prayer, I feel like a battlefield in which the problems of the past and of the present are being fought out. I am reminded of a line from Deuteronomy: "Yahweh will fight the battle, you have only to keep still." I try to keep myself available, allowing my heart to be the battlefield. The world in all its pain needs some place to struggle and to come to peace. It is a service I can give, a great work in nonviolence, to volunteer my heart as the welcoming space of unrestrained hospitality. This takes all the courage I can muster up as the field of battle is often quite bloody!

In the late sixties and early seventies, the country was filled with resistance over Vietnam, the Attica prison riots, the shooting of George Wallace, the return of the P.O.W.'s, the Watergate scandal, and the resignation of the President of the United States. This was the backdrop of my teen years. I had a button on my jacket which read: "War is not healthy for children and other living things." On my wrist I wore a P.O.W. bracelet which held the name of a Major from Texas. Everytime a list of returning P.O.W.'s was released I would search through, praying his name would be on it. I corresponded for a time with his wife. He never made it home.

I remember a teacher in school having us pray that when the boys in our class reached the draft age our country would be at peace and they would never know the horrors of war. I have carried my peers in prayer ever since. I did not recognize then that even though violence is everywhere condemned, it still flourishes. While violence can be outright and crude, it is more often invisible and subtle, with effects no less deadly. Many are the ways we strike the vulnerable while not daring to touch the stronger. We victimize those who have no protection or escape from our abuse, especially those with whom we live and

work. It happens in the daily digs and pokes that corrode the spirit, in the lacerating we do with tongue and wit, in frozen attitudes we assume and which we refuse to be melted in the fire of compassion.

Despite the usual negative connotation of violence, there are also positive images: the super nova explosion from which the universe came to be, the tearing from the womb in the birth of a child, the righteous anger of the Lord in driving the money changers out of the temple. Violent is the desire of God as He demands that we accept the shortcomings in ourselves rather than masquerading them in the person of another. Violent is the Spirit who unfreezes our cowardly hearts and breaks the locks of our fear and self distrust. And violent are our efforts to be with Jesus in His passion, to know the freedom of self emptying, born out of suffering love.

We are now in the latter years of the 80's, a decade which has witnessed the Iranian hostage crisis, the attempted assassinations of President Reagan and Pope John Paul II, the rise and fall of Solidarity, the invasion of Grenada, an escalation in nuclear arms build up, the Beirut bombings, a new regime in the Philippines and the space shuttle disaster. In some ways it is a time of world weariness, we live in the shadow of cross and passion. The earth suffers and nature is exploited in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects. The heart and mind of humanity is racked and pierced.

We are in a life threatening situation today: we suffer from an addiction to militarism, the prospects of a catastrophic global emergency resulting from a nuclear war, pollution of our air, water, land and food. These addictive patterns must be broken by non-cooperation and an introduction to creative alternatives. Any work we do in choosing LIFE will of necessity call forth the feminine. The feminine is the refuge!

The feminine touches us to encircle the battered, fearful, death dealing shadows of ourselves with embraces of compassion. I love the image of the encircling feminine, holding and healing. The architecture of our monastery chapel speaks of the womb and the arms of Mary's embrace. It is in the maternal love of the feminine that our world will begin to find its healing.

Another image apt for our day is that of a boat crossing a stormy sea. The journey is rough and it seems our life boat is being pushed and pulled. Many seek to disembark, others jump overboard, and

The great insight that
held Paul of the Cross
to passion prayer and ministry
was his acknowledgement of
God's love impelling Christ to live,
to love, to die, to rise; to journey
from life through death
to New Life.

some just fall asleep. I am reminded of Jesus' admonition to the disciples to "stay awake and pray not to be put to the test." What does it mean for us to "stay awake" in these times of deep cultural and societal pathology? In *The Challenge of Peace* the American bishops remind us that a society cannot live in peace with itself unless every human person is treated with dignity and all human life is revered as sacred. We need to don our seamless garments and remember that it is holy ground upon which we walk.

Society makes it difficult to be awake. We are bombarded through the media with scenes of starving third world refugees, thousands of homeless and displaced persons, the violence of war and its tragedies, and the plight of the poor. We wake up for a time but then we forget again because the kind of society in which we live tries to anesthetize us into a dreamless sleep. How keen is our awareness? Are we awake when we sit down to a meal? Today we are surrounded by a fast food mentality. We pick up a meal, read a few pages of the paper, hold a conversation, swallow our food in a few huge gulps and think about the business of what we are going to do after we eat. We do violence

to the meal, failing to reverence it as a living reality. We do violence to our bodies by not being conscious of how much or what we put into them.

Pick up a paper cup, plate, napkin. Then take a walk through the woods. Do you sense a connection between the paper goods and the trees? Are you aware that paper products are resources of the earth and to the extent that we misuse and abuse them we do the same to the planet.

What about silence? Are we losing our taste for it? Silence has undergone a tremendous violation. It has been invaded by Sony Walkmans, ghetto blasters, T.V.'s, radios, V.C.R.'s, and telephones. Whenever there is some free time we fill it with a noisy occupation. We cannot be ourselves without anything to accompany us. We rush from one thing to the next never quite doing the thing we are doing. I am reminded of the story of the Zen master who asks his disciple, "What do you do when you do the dishes?" "Do you do the dishes to get them done? Or do you do the dishes to DO THE DISHES?"

The many products, advertisements, and things society offers have a way of colonizing us. As consumers we become victims. We need to become independent and make a return back to ourselves.

Eating a meal, using paperware, and sitting in silence all have to do with peace and nonviolence. Ultimately the responsibility of creating an authentic world peace lies within our own personal choices. We choose every moment of the day.

I return again and again to the poem quoted in the beginning of this reflection. I live out of its cycle. We all do. I pray for the courage to withstand life's attacks in all its forms and faces. Yes, many are the deaths which weave through our lives. Sometimes we are forced to hurl ourselves overboard, the weight of our burdens like milestones around our necks. We sink into the depths of an ocean abyss. The oppressed and oppressor, the violator and violated all mingle in the life streams of ourselves. The girl despairs, the sea pirate rages, the onlooker tries to make sense of it all. We are a people of many names and faces, called and fashioned by the One who is our Source and our Shalom.

By: Sr. Gail Worcelo, C.P.

Women in Passion: The Third World

Leave her alone! Why are you bothering her? She has done a fine and beautiful thing for me. You will always have the poor with you, and anytime you want you can help them. But you will not always have me. She did what she could . . .

(John 12:7-8)

These familiar words of Jesus, spoken on the occasion of a banquet given in his honor, appear to be both a harsh rebuke directed toward the one who was soon to become his betrayer as well as a grateful response to a humble follower. In this scene the ministrations of a woman are highlighted by a loving Master at a time when his own Passion lurked menacingly on the horizon.

Women of Jerusalem, weep not for me but for yourselves and for your children.

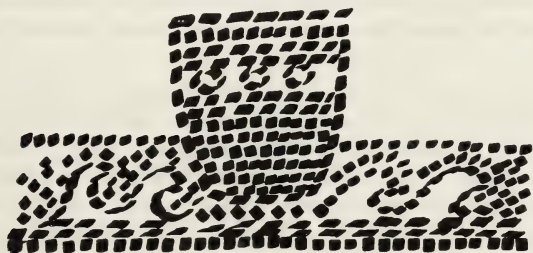
(Luke 23:28)

Luke alone recalls this touching moment when Jesus, in the throes of his Passion, reaches out in compassion to a small band of women who courageously and openly stood by him in his final moments and offered him all they had left—their tears of sorrow. Such a moving bond of communion is depicted in this exchange between Master and followers. How his words must have echoed in their minds during the days and weeks and years following his Resurrection! How his words

echo through the centuries until the present generation causing us to ponder and reflect upon the human condition as we now experience it, and on the legacy we have to hand on to our children and our children's children.

These two scenes, so intimately associated with Jesus' Passion, provide us with glimpses of women who responded to their Lord in ways which were, and still are, part of the essence of their feminine nature. In the first scene we see a beautiful woman willing to give all to minister to Jesus. Without thought to the cost involved in the "wasting" of the entire jar of precious aromatic oil used for the anointing of his feet, she responded to her Master; she reached out with genuine concern.

In the second scene Luke focuses on a group of women responding to the pain and agony of a man at whom most of the crowd were jeering, laughing or staring in disbelief. Their tears were of true sincerity and heartfelt compassion. They could not bear to see the one they loved so dearly in such a terrible state of degradation and obvious pain.



As one ponders these two brief encounters with the Master, images of womanhood as it is being lived in the world today, come readily to mind. More particularly, the focus of these reflections is on womanhood in a country only now becoming acquainted with the advances of modern technology. This is the woman who knows about, but has not yet, and probably never will, experience such conveniences as electricity, telephone or indoor running water. This is the woman who must travel miles on foot each day to purchase a few meager sup-

plies to feed her family. This is the woman whose social life revolves entirely around the local shop. This is the woman who must work long hours to support and nourish and care for the extended family entrusted to her—many of whom she probably has not personally brought into this world, but who have been “taken under her wing.”

The observations and impressions reflected in these pages are those of one who has only recently left a first world country, namely the United States, to live among and work with the people of this mission country of Jamaica. My life among Jamaicans, which has been only slightly less than one year, hardly qualifies me as an expert on the life and culture of the people of this beautiful, but nonetheless, underdeveloped country. However, working on the premise that first impressions are quite often most accurate, and having had the opportunity to reflect with a number of Jamaican women, I would like to share how I see the Passion being lived out among the women of this land. I think it is significant to note that my own background as an American woman religious will most definitely color my perceptions of the Jamaican woman, which are frequently received with a mixture of emotions: sadness, anger, frustration and frequently, a sense of hopelessness. One meets up with so many women who only see their worth as measured in the eyes of the man or men who have fathered their children; women who perceive their goodness and value as directly proportional to their usefulness to a man who frequently does not or cannot honor fidelity in a marriage commitment. Do not get me wrong, I have met many a Jamaican woman who is proud of who she is and stands with dignity in this native land which she so passionately loves. These women are fine role models for a nation of women who so desperately need a good dose of self-respect. Unfortunately, however, these are the minority.

In every major city on the island of Jamaica a large, blatantly obvious billboard shouts its message out: “Before you are a mother, be a woman.” This billboard bespeaks a problem which is primarily attitudinal, and this attitude is exclusively geared toward the self-worth of its audience, many of whom may be just barely able to read the words. A common perception among young Jamaican women is that womanhood is based on the ability to give birth. Pregnancy is rampant on the island and, according to the Statistical Bureau of Jamaica, the illegitimacy rate for 1983 was a staggering 84.3%. The bill-

board campaign, sponsored by the National Family Planning Board, is just one attempt to educate and alter this alarming trend.

**WOMEN OF JERUSALEM
WEEP NOT FOR ME
BUT FOR YOURSELVES
AND FOR YOUR CHILDREN.
(LUKE 23:28)**

The underlying reason for the fact that so many women continue to bring child after child into this world indicates a great need for yet more education. Peggy Antrobus, Tutor/Coordinator of the Woman's Development Unit of the Extra-Mural Department of the University of the West Indies made the following observation:

As long as women need children to help them in their work, as long as motherhood is defined as their main mission in life, and as long as their power in the family and the community depends on the number of children they have, women will continue to have large families.*

What about the society in which these children are being born? Over one half of the population of this country is under the age of twenty-five. Unemployment, particularly among unskilled men, is rampant. While efforts are being made to alleviate such problems, the reality remains. Family life centers around the woman who must bear the burden of responsibility in this predominantly matriarchal society. Children are frequently reared by grandmothers as the middle

*"A Germain Journal of International Affairs," *Women in Development*, 1976-77, Peggy Antrobus; from "The Jamaican Nurse," Vol. 24, No. 1, 1984, page 24.

generation of women must assume the rôle of breadwinner. Unskilled women, who can more easily obtain employment than unskilled men, often assume positions as domestic helpers in the homes of the middle-class and the well-to-do.

While young girls are taught the survival skills so necessary for them in this culture, young boys are frequently pampered and molded into the husbands their mothers never had. This, unfortunately, perpetuates the problem of a self-indulgent and irresponsible male sector. In order to get to the root of this particular problem, one must go back to the days of slavery when the island was still under British rule. Native Jamaicans of African ancestry were primarily the property of the aristocratic land owners. In this capacity, family life among the slaves was not fostered and marriage was not allowed. Male slaves were encouraged to impregnate as many female slaves as possible in order to insure future generations of slaves. Female slaves, in addition to their regular duties in the homes and on the farms of their masters, had total responsibility for the raising of the children who would one day assume the roles of slavery. Even in the present generation traces of some of the attitudes associated with family life during slavery days remain. To this day fathering is not regarded with any sense of responsibility and marriage is often regarded as a social institution rather than a life commitment. It appears that it will take many more generations to break down some of these commonly held attitudes.

As young women mature to middle age, one observes yet another interesting phenomenon. The mature woman who has observed "life in the raw"—who has seen suffering and neglect, is precisely the woman who feels compelled to reach out to those in need and share what little she has. She is like the widow of St. Luke's gospel who, "poor as she was, gave all that she had to live on" (Luke 21:4). It is not unusual to see a woman in her forties or even her fifties with a brood of young children whom she has taken into her care to nurture and to bring up in a society incapable of providing any other alternative.

Are not these the women Jesus was addressing on the road to Calvary? They are the women whose lives are spent not only for the children they have borne but also for the children they have nurtured and for whom no sacrifice is too great. One need only observe the hundreds upon hundreds of young ones who pour into the streets each

school day morning, all spotlessly cleaned and groomed, despite the humble homes from which they emerged. Hopefully the education and training they receive will adequately prepare them to become the adults of tomorrow—ready to take responsibility for their own lives.

There is yet another group of women who are just as truly experiencing a sense of passion as they live out their commitment to this country. These are women, like myself, who can see the injustices of such a society. We recognize the need for so much more education to help these Jamaican women to regard themselves as something more than second class citizens. Our passion is one of inadequacy as we realize how very little can be done to change attitudes. These attitudes are very deeply ingrained into the culture and change will be slow and tedious. But try we must, in whatever way we can, to show our Jamaican sisters that they too can stand with dignity and be proud of who they are.



To a first world mind this picture of the Jamaican culture may appear bleak; the situation might seem hopeless. Yet, this is precisely where we err; this is where our perceptions fall short of the mark. For it is a genuine sense of hope and a deep abiding faith in the providence of God which are the driving forces of the Jamaican woman. She is forever praising the Lord for his kindness and trusting always

in his future protection. She knows without a doubt, that trials will come, but so too, the heavenly reward. Jamaicans, from the time they learn to speak, know the words of all the popular "Redemption songs," songs which give praise to their Father in heaven and speak with familiarity of the place awaiting them when they "get home, on the other side." The Jamaican woman possesses an inner strength which is nurtured by prayer and a commitment to pass on to her children a life better than the life she has led. She is a faith-filled, loving follower of her Divine Master, confident of his care and concern for her.

Jesus did not allow the women of Jerusalem to stand still. He would not permit them to drown in their own tears. The message of Easter Sunday was not a message of tears but rather, a message of action. Yes, there was a time for weeping and there was a time for the washing of feet. But the message of the Resurrection was a challenge of hope; a challenge of action, "Why are you weeping? . . . Do not cling to me . . . Go, and carry the news to my brothers . . ."

So too, it is the Jamaican woman who will not allow this country to give up hope. She will continue to work hard to create a better world, a better country, a better community for her children and for her children's children. The message is well expressed in a wonderful Jamaican folk song popularized by one of the leading vocalists:

Woman, don't cry . . . everyting's gonna be irie.
(Woman, don't cry . . . everything is going to be alright.)

Bibliography

The *memoria passionis* considered in this issue of *The Passionist* is founded on a growing body of materials that would prove helpful for the development of affective spirituality and the role of the feminine, women's studies and the desire for freedom and for the future. The following materials represent some foundational bibliography from which one might pick and choose.

Two articles by Johann Baptist Metz could serve as introduction: "The Future in the Memory of Suffering" *Concilium* 76 (1972) 9-25, and "A Short Apology of Narrative" *Concilium* 85 (1973) 84-96. Recent biblical scholarship has been aided by Elisabeth Schussler Fionzenza's *In Memory of Her, A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (N.Y. Crossroad, 1983) and *Feminist Perspectives on Biblical Scholarship* edited by Adela Yarbro Collins (Chico, CA, Scholars Press, 1985). Gabriele Winkler and Rosemary Rader make contributions to early christian developments in *The Continuing Quest for God* edited by William Skudlarek (Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 1982). Also Rader's *Breaking Boundaries, Male/Female Friendship in Early Christian Communities* (N.Y., Paulist, 1983) makes good reading. John Bugge traces the origins of affective response to God in his superb *Virginitas: An Essay in the History of a Medieval Ideal* (The Hague, M. Nijhoff, 1975).

Some general overviews of the Middle Ages and its spirituality would prove helpful in plumbing the various currents of thought and practice and the various persons who contributed to this heritage. Eminently useful are Jaroslav Pelikan's *The Christian Tradition, Vol. III: The Growth of Medieval Theology (600-1300)* (Chicago, UCP, 1978) and Jean Leclercq et al. *A History of Christian Spirituality, II: The Spirituality of the Middle Ages* (New York, Paulist, 1982).

tuality of the Middle Ages (N.Y., Crossroad, 1968). Further insight could be garnered from two Cistercian Publications volumes edited by E. Rozanne Elder: *The Spirituality of Western Christendom* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1976) and *The Roots of the Modern Christian Tradition* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1984). Two other works would be helpful in viewing the developments in women's contribution to spirituality: Matthew Fox, ed. *Western Spirituality: Historical Roots, Ecumenical Routes* (Notre Dame, Fides, 1979) and Rosemary Radford Ruether's *Religion and Sexism* (N.Y., Simon and Schuster, 1974).

No Passionist could ignore the importance of the liturgical calendar, the piety of the Passion in the middle ages and the role of medieval drama in creating a spirituality of the Passion and Cross. Most helpful are the two wonderful volumes of David C. Fowler: *The Bible in Early English Literature* (Seattle, UWP, 1976) and *The Bible in Middle English Literature* (Seattle, UWP, 1984). A short and valuable volume has been put together by J.A.W. Bennett: *Poetry of the Passion* (Oxford, Clarendon P., 1982). Both Fowler and Bennett offer excellent materials easily translatable into ministerial action. One would also enjoy the translation of Charles W. Kennedy: *An Anthology of Old English Poetry*. It would be interesting to contrast some of his pieces (e.g., *The Dream of the Rood*) with later affective materials by St. Bernard and those of the Cistercian spirituality.

Cistercian affective spirituality, rooted in the incarnation and passion of Jesus, as well as in the Song of Song tradition (see Bugge's *Virginitas* above), provides Passionists with a variety of material. Two fine introductions to St. Bernard are available: G.R. Evans, *The Mind of St. Bernard of Clairvaux* (Oxford, Clarendon P., 1983) and the essays edited by Benedicta Ward: *The Influence of Saint Bernard* (Oxford, SLG P., 1976). The essays of Andrew Louth ("Bernard and Affective Mysticism," p. 1-10) and Sister Isabel Mary ("The Knights of God: Citeaux and the Quest of the Holy Grail," p. 53-88) in Ward's volume are excellent. Bernard was not the only key figure in the development of affective mysticism. Also important was Gueric of Igny. John Morson, in his *Christ the Way, The Christology of Gueric of Igny* (Kalamazoo, MI, Cistercian Publications, 1972), has a wonderful chapter on "The Wounds of Christ" (p. 129-136). This is redolent of piety we would be comfortable with in Paul of the Cross. No one volume has been better received than that of Caroline Walker Bynum: *Jesus as*

Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages (Berkeley, UCP, 1982). She devotes significant space to the affective shaping of the spiritual life in motifs which are familiar to us Passionists, (e.g., the soul hiding in the wounds and side of Christ). Two essays by Giles Constable indicate that some themes and spiritual emphases keep recurring in medieval spirituality: "Twelfth-Century Spirituality and the late Middle Ages" and "The Popularity of Twelfth-Century Spiritual Writers in the Late Middle Ages." Both appear in *Religious Life and Thought (11th-12th Centuries)* (London, Variorum Reprints, 1979). A more recent book is by Richard Kieckhefer, *Unquiet Souls: Fourteenth-Century Saints and Their Religious Milieu* (Chicago, UCP, 1984). He devotes two helpful chapters to devotion to the Passion and Penitence as it was evident in the lives of both women and men.

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sense of hope and a
deep abiding faith in
the providence of God
which are the driving
forces of the
Jamaican woman.

Two books aid in understanding the mystical tradition of Julian of Norwich. The first is the classic of W.A. Pantin: *The English Church in the Fourteenth Century* (Toronto, UTP, 1980) and the superb study of Brant Pelphrey: *Love Was His Meaning: The Theology and Mysticism of Julian of Norwich* (Austria, U. of Salzburg, 1982). Part IV deals with her mystical theology of contrition, compassion and the cross and the true longing for God.

It is fascinating to note the resurgence of medieval studies coming out of university presses in recent years. Some of the interest is focused on women's mystical life. Peter Dronke, the fine medieval scholar, has edited documents and offered commentary in his *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, CUP, 1984). Paul Szarmach has edited *An Introduction to the Medieval Mystics of Europe* (Albany, SUNY, 1984) and Katharina M. Wilson has edited *Medieval Women Writers* (Athens, U. of Georgia P., 1984). Some good overview material is available in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, Ed. by Rosemary Radford Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (N.Y., Simon and Schuster, 1979) and *Distant Echoes: Medieval Religious Women, Vol. I* edited by John A. Nichols and Lillian Thomas Shank (Kalamazoo, MI, Cistercian Publications, 1984). Paulist Press has offered recent introductions and translations of medieval women mystics. Two helpful volumes in the Classics of Western Spirituality series are *Hadewijch: The Complete Works* by Columba Hart (N.Y., 1980) and *Catherine of Siena: The Dialogue* by Suzanne Noffke (N.Y., 1980).

A modest menu of current women writers could serve as a fine introduction to the developments in spirituality fostered by women. Paulist Press has issued two fine essays worth reading: Monika K. Hellwig: *Christian Women in a Troubled World* (N.Y., 1985) and Sandra M. Schneiders' *Women and the Word* (N.Y., 1986). The latter offers fine bibliographical material for further study in a crucial area for us as preachers of the Word. Joann Wolski Conn has painstakingly edited some wonderful essays in her *Women's Spirituality: Resources for Christian Development* (N.Y., Paulist, 1986). *Concilium* has devoted its number 182 to *Women: Invisible in Church and Theology*, edited by Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Mary Collins (Edinburg, T & T Clark, 1985). Nadine Foley has edited fine essays that relate to the ministry of preaching in her *Preaching and the Non-Ordained* (Collegeville, Liturgical Press, 1983). These essays are from a conference on preaching held in Ohio in October, 1982. Finally, a fine attempt at offering a basis for redoing human story lines has been given by Mary Jo Weaver in her *New Catholic Women: A Contemporary Challenge to Traditional Religious Authority* (San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1985). A good critique of this volume is done by Sally Cunneen in *Cross Currents* XXXV (1985-6) 458-9.

Affective mysticism and the role of the feminine in spiritual development span the ages of western christianity. Two last suggestions show this emphasis well. The first is offered in a quasi-humorous vein, though the volume is profoundly valuable; the second is a hint to the import of inculturating this focus for peoples emerging in our world. The first is Nicholas James Perella: *The Kiss Sacred and Profane* (Berkeley, UCP, 1969); the second offering is Virgil Elizondo "Our Lady of Guadalupe as a Cultural Symbol: 'The Power of the Powerless'" *Concilium* 102 (1977) 25-33.





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Graphics

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PREFACE

In issue #13 we began a series of commentaries on our *Constitutions* given by Fr. Harry Gielen, C.P. at the St. Patrick's Province congress in June, 1985. We open this issue with the second in the series, a commentary on "Our Special Vow and the Evangelical Counsels."

Then, Fr. Ernst Henau, C.P. continues our discussion of the important and difficult challenge of preaching the Passion in a vital and meaningful way to the people of our day. He first describes some of the difficulties that confront the preacher of the Passion and then tries to explicate possible ways the contemporary preacher can effectively proclaim the Gospel of the Passion.

The next two articles take up the issue of Liturgy in our lives as Passionists. The first, by Fr. James DeManuele, C.P., reflects on the Eucharist as the primary model for understanding the Cross as foundation of our life and ministry. Then Fr. John O'Brien, C.P. reflects on the theology of the Liturgy of the Hours and draws out some of the practical implications for our communal celebration.

This issue concludes with a book review by Fr. John Francis Koblér, C.P. of *Solzhenitsyn at Harvard: The Address, Twelve Early Responses, and Six Later Reflections*, edited by Ronald Berman.

Michael Higgins, C.P.
Editor

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Our Special Vow and the Evangelical Counsels

Introduction

"We seek the unity of our lives and apostolate in the Passion of Jesus." This clear statement opening paragraph 5 of our new Constitutions may look like an innocuous affirmation. It is, in fact, the result of protracted discussions held during the 1968 and 1970 General Chapter sessions, particularly in the first Commission dealing with the Fundamentals of our life. It was felt that the so-called "fourth vow" should not be conceived as an addition to a pre-given concept of religious life. Rather the vow of the Passion should be the dynamic force which permeates our specific way of living the evangelical counsels. That is why the new Constitutions avoid the term "fourth vow" and adopt the term "special vow." For example, in paragraph 6 we read: "We express our participation in the Passion by a special vow." That is also the reason why this vow is treated before the traditional religious vows.

This option has solid theological grounds. In a recent book by Th. Matura, *Suivre Jésus: Des conseils de perfection au radicalisme évangélique* (Paris, 1983), this author criticizes the current theology of the religious life which is based mainly on the prominent, if not exclusive, place given to the three evangelical counsels. He argues that there is a more profound foundation to be found in the evangelical radicalism of the "following of Jesus." Does not the Council document, *Perfectae Caritatis* ("Decree on the Appropriate Renewal of Religious Life"), validate such an approach when stating (# 2.a): "Since the fundamen-

tal norm of the religious life is a following of Christ as proposed by the gospel, such is to be regarded by all communities as their supreme law."

The Chapter Document (1968-1970) still had a rather ambiguous way of describing our special vow. It stated: "Through this means we bind ourselves to meditate and study the Passion of Christ in order to promote by word and deed a deeper awareness of its meaning and value for each man and for the life of the world." In the final version of our Constitutions (# 6) this statement reads as follows: "Through this vow we bind ourselves to keep alive *the memory of the Passion of Christ*. By word and deed we strive to foster awareness of its meaning and value for each person and for the life of the world." (Emphasis added.)

St. Paul's original inspiration

The expression "to keep alive the memory of the Passion" (#6), which replaces the traditional expression "to promote devotion to the Passion of Christ" is, in fact, a return to the original inspiration and terminology of St. Paul of the Cross. In his study, "The Presence of the Passion of Jesus in the Structure and Apostolate of the Passionist Congregation" (*Studies in Passionist History and Spirituality*, 3), Fr. Antonio Artola has examined the fluctuating terminology of St. Paul of the Cross with regard to the Passion theme. Here is a brief resume of that development.

The first reference to the finality of the Congregation in connection with the Passion appears in a passage of the primitive Rule. In a brief section concerning Friday and the memory of the Passion which his followers ought to cultivate on that day, Paul writes: "... And furthermore, dearly beloved, you must know that the main object in wearing black (according to the special inspiration that God gave me) is to be clothed in mourning for the Passion and Death of Jesus. For this purpose let us never forget to have always with us a constant and sorrowful remembrance of him." (Cf. *Words from the Heart*, Dublin: 1976, p. 14.)

This simple recommendation at the beginning of his role as founder reveals an aspect which will quickly emerge and will be repeated in an almost obsessive way. Namely, that the new Congregation ought to

relive the Passion as a perpetual memory. Our attention is immediately caught by the presence of three expressions relative to remembrance-memory: "Let us never *forget* to have . . . a *remembrance* . . . *continual* and sorrowful." (Emphasis added.) As is easily seen, we do not have here any concrete kind of devotion to the Passion. It is a matter of reliving it as a constant remembrance. After this first text, Paul of the Cross will insistently return to the theme of the Passion lived as a perpetual remembrance, when he wants to precise the purpose of the new Congregation.

In the Rule of 1736, when the founder refers to the purpose of the Institute, the word "memory" appears three times and "devotion" four times. Upon closer examination of the contexts of these citations, we note that "memory" is used in connection with the images that refer to the first inspiration: namely, dressed in black and mourning over the Passion. "Memory" is also the key to the meaning of the special vow. Contrariwise, the word "devotion" always appears in a juridical context, relative to the special vow and its binding purpose.

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Rule of 1741

In the Rule of 1741 we find important modifications. "Memory" is reduced to two citations, while "devotion" has risen to five. What happened? In November, 1740, Paul of the Cross presented the Rules to the Holy See in order to have them approved with an apostolic rescript. The review took until May of the following year. The examination was severe. The Cardinals subjected all of it to rigorous sifting. Obviously the fact of a special vow required important theological and juridical precisions in order to avoid doubts of conscience for anyone who professed it. (For example, the recitation of the Lord's prayer and the Hail Mary five times daily was imposed by this revi-

sion.) The scrutiny brought about a substantial change of terminology. If, as a matter of fact, in the primitive and earlier texts the mystical element was expressed by *memory* and the juridic one by *devotion* in a harmonious and balanced way, now the balance was tipped in favor of devotion—to the detriment of the mystical element. Those discussions and changes had to have an influence on the Founder himself, and from that time on his correspondence makes more use of the word “devotion.”

The redaction of the formula of profession took place between the revision of 1741 and the approbation by the Brief of 1746. As a result of the casuistry occasioned by the approval of 1741, mention of the Passion entered in the vow formula, but tied to the word *devotion*.

It is a striking fact that the 1746 revision of the Rules returns to the words *memory* or *memory and cult* in all texts where the Passion is mentioned as the end of the Institute. The only place where the term *devotion* is found is in the profession formula. And this remains the case in the later revisions of the Rule.

It can truly be said that our new Constitutions, by preferring the term *memory of the Passion* to that of *devotion to the Passion*, are not only faithful to the Founder's original inspiration, but also that they adopt a biblical expression with a rich biblical content. It is this biblical content which may deepen our spirituality by linking it up with a central category of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The biblical sense of God's power

In our new Constitutions the second sentence of paragraph 5 reads: “His Passion reveals the power of God which penetrates the world, destroying the power of evil and building up the Kingdom of God.” This sentence needs some interpretation if it is to reveal its full meaning.

The power of God, as revealed by Jesus' Passion (as, indeed, by his whole life), is a special kind of power. It is not the superlative of ordinary power that is based on dominion or oppression. God's power is essentially related to the apparently powerless quality of love. God does not enter into competition with those who prevail themselves of their force or their possessions, their self-complacency.

By emphasizing the particular value of Jesus' Passion as the revelation of God's power, we insert ourselves into a long tradition of a

qualified speaking about God, of a specific theology which is rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition. The kind of power that Jesus wants to rely upon is radically opposed to the power that draws its strength from magical imposition or protective safety.

The affirmation, "His Passion reveals the power of God," is a complete reversal of a current image of God that is evoked by the term "Almighty." Most of our liturgical prayers start with that invocation: "Almighty and eternal God . . ." We have become so accustomed to its use that we hardly reflect anymore on its proper and qualified meaning. When we call God "almighty," we should be aware of the fact that we do not use a clear "concept," but rather a word of resistance, a word of faith that refuses to accept the harshness of a given reality. In life as it is, God is anything but almighty. He appears to be as powerless as we are. He has to witness that his own Son is executed on a cross, that in our world millions of children are starving, that peoples and individuals are being oppressed and exploited. A God, who has to witness all these things, cannot be called "almighty" in the current sense of that word. God's omnipotence is no other than the power of his vulnerable love which remains faithful to his people in *all* the situations in which they suffer. It is this power of God's vulnerable love which will do his people justice in the same way as He did justice to his crucified Son: "This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, but which has become the head of the corner" (Acts 4:11).

It should be mentioned, if only in passing, that the term "*omnipotens*" in the Creed is a deficient translation of the original "*pantokrator*" in which the idea of "providence" is much more relevant. (See A. De Halleux, "Dieu le Père tout-puissant," in *Revue Théologique de Louvain* 8, 1977, 401-422.)

The Cross and Christian spirituality

The Cross is the most characteristic and distinctive feature of the Christian faith, but Christian spirituality is not a spirituality of suffering. Rather, *it is a spirituality focused on the following of Jesus*. Not all suffering is Christian: only that which flows from the following of Jesus is. The latter is what Jesus demanded of his disciples. Jesus' cross itself is the end of a process. If we do not go through that process, then the cross to which we offer our acceptance may not be the Christian

cross. "The Cross," writes D. Bonhoeffer, "is not the sort of suffering which is inseparable from this mortal life, but the suffering which is an essential part of the specifically Christian life." "Jesus does not suggest that his disciples seek pain; he rather makes it clear that if they remain disciples they will not have to seek it, it will seek them." (J. McKenzie)



The many references throughout the Constitutions to our involvement with the poor and the oppressed are explications of how we have to keep alive the memory of Christ's Passion in our days. The message of the cross "does not allow us to focus on the story of Jesus' suffering in such a way as to forget the anonymous history of suffering in the world, in our concentration on the Cross of Jesus to forget the many crosses in the world, in our concern with his Passion to be silent about the many torments and countless instances of anonymous death, the sufferings passed over in silence, the persecution of untold thousands of human beings tortured to death in this century because of their faith, race or political attitude in fascist or communist regimes . . . But in the history of the Church and of Christianity have we not separated Christ's hope-giving sufferings too sharply from the single passion story of Humankind? By linking the Christian idea of suffering exclusively to his cross and to ourselves as his disciples, have we not created free zones in our world where the sufferings of others go on unhindered? Only as we are alert to hear the dark prophecy of this suffering can we apply it fruitfully to ourselves, do we hear and confess aright the hopeful message of Christ's suffering." (Cf. *Our Hope: A Confession of Faith for this Time*. Study Encounter 20, 1976, p. 69.)

The three vows: in general

The fundamental norm of the religious life is a following of Christ as proposed by the gospel. The whole of the gospel is source and inspiration for the religious life, its "supreme law." Even when acknowledging this basic insight, Vatican II safeguarded the traditional doctrine by emphasizing that the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience are eminently characteristic of religious life. They do not exhaust the richness of the Gospel tale, but they do express some core values of that same Gospel. More than anything else it is the three evangelical counsels that shape the public image of a religious community.

The three traditional vows are not aimed at renouncing human values, but rather at leading us to understand and live these values *as created* and so as not absolute, as not definitive, but precisely as values that refer to the Creator, to Him who is the last ground of all life.

To mark the beginning of Jesus' public life the Gospel tells us the story of Jesus' temptations in the desert. It may seem strange to relate this scene to the theme of the evangelical counsels, but a reflection in one of Dostoevski's works made me aware of a profound link. "If there has ever been on earth a real stupendous miracle," he writes, "it took place on that day, on the day of the three temptations. The statement of those three questions was itself the miracle. If it were possible to imagine simply for the sake of argument that those three questions of the dread spirit (The three questions referred to are: Command this stone to become bread; If you worship me, all the kingdoms of the earth shall be yours; If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from the temple)—had perished utterly from the books and that we had to restore them and to invest them anew, and to do so had gathered together all the wise men of the earth—rulers, chief priests, learned men, philosophers, poets—and had set them the task to invest three questions, three human phrases determining the future of the world and of humanity—dost Thee believe that all the wisdom of the earth united could have invented anything in depth and force equal to the three questions which were actually put to Thee then by the mighty spirit in the desert? In those three questions the whole subsequent history of humanity is, as it were, brought together into one whole and in them are united all the unresolved historical contradic-

tions of human nature." (Quoted in F. W. Dillistone, *Jesus Christ and his Cross*. London: 1953, p. 22-23.)

The point in the temptations narrative is that Jesus does not want to bypass or to force the limitations of the human condition. On the contrary, he sees it as his task to bring the God-given life to fulfillment by deliberately accepting these limitations in view of a truly human growth in responsible freedom. The religious vows are meant to consolidate the dikes precisely at those points where one is tempted to make absolute claims on what is only of relative value.



The Cross is the most
characteristic and distinctive
feature of the Christian faith-

The three vows: in detail

Obedience thus orientates human freedom directly towards others. By this vow the religious are prevented from using their freedom in a dominating or manipulating way. It makes them look for self-fulfillment while listening to others, while being at their service. They are thus freed from the enslaving competition prevailing in the Church as well as in society, which almost compels people to strive for higher ranks on the social and hierarchical ladder.

In a comment on St. Paul's text: "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2), D. Bonhoeffer wrote: "It is, first of all, the freedom of the other person that is a burden to the Christian . . . He could get rid of this burden by refusing the other person his freedom, by constraining him and thus doing violence to his personality, by stamping his own image on him. But if he lets God create his image in the man, he by this token gives him his freedom and himself bears the burden of the freedom of another creature of God. The freedom of another person includes all that we mean by a person's nature, individuality, endowment. It also includes his weakness and oddities, which are such a trial to our patience, everything that produces frictions, conflicts and collisions among us. To bear the burden of the other person means involvement with the created reality of the other, to accept and to affirm it, and in bearing with it to break through to the point where we take joy in it." (Cf. *Life Together*. London: 1054, p. 7.)

In the same way, the *celibate form of life* for the Kingdom of God expresses a reserve preserving human love to be experienced as absolute and infinite. Evangelical celibacy is the expression of an uncompromising concentration of longing for the day of the Lord. What it has to do with is a state of being radically seized by and unreservedly engaged on behalf of the dominion of God that is at hand. Communities of celibate people may fulfill an important task in today's society, even apart from any specific social functions, by being reminders of the relative values of even the highest potentialities in creation.

Poverty as an evangelical attitude is a protest against the tyranny of having, of possessing and of pure self-assertion. In our days "it is an effective form of resistance against the power of a society in which, in practice, nothing is without an equivalent for which it can be exchanged, in which everything has to too great an extent been enrolled under the banner of utilitarian ends and market value, and which therefore is hardly able to admit any humanity other than that based on utilitarian considerations." (See J. B. Metz, *Followers of Christ*. London: 1978, p. 60.) Evangelical poverty criticizes the extreme social weakening and devaluation of attitudes for which one literally does not get anything: attitudes like friendliness, gratefulness, love, respect for the dead, involvement with the poor. These attitudes are increasingly outlawed by society, because they do not, as such, pro-

vide impulses for new productive efforts. But they should continue to characterize the life of religious communities that want to resist the temptation of having and possessing.

So the evangelical counsels have a liberating and unifying force: they orientate our possibilities in one direction, so that we can live without self-division, completely involved for the sake of God's Kingdom. This sense of liberated freedom opens a way to relate to others and to communicate something of our profound happiness. Realizing that we are called and loved by God with all the limitations that characterize our created existence, we are able to recognize in others their right to being limited and to be respected in their very limitations. That is why we are in a privileged position to get involved with people who have nothing to rely upon but their bare humanity, people who are poor, sick, lonely, oppressed.

The three vows in daily life

However true it remains that the evangelical counsels are core values of the religious life, it cannot be said that these counsels as such are given great importance by the religious in their existential lives. If we compare religious life to a building, the evangelical counsels may be seen as its foundations, but life is lived at another level and gets its inspiration primarily from the *'seuela Christi'*, from the following of Jesus. In that context we can only approve the prominent place that in our Constitutions is given to our special vow which, indeed, has directly to do with that following of Jesus in its most radical demands.

I happened to read three papers of General Superiors on "The Problem of the Vows Today" in which this view was somehow confirmed. Allow me to cite briefly from these papers.

Ambrose Southey, Abbot of the Trappists writes: "When it comes to the question of what importance do the monks give to their vows, I find myself somewhat embarrassed. To be perfectly honest, very few seem to give much *explicit* thought to their vows. This might seem to be an exaggeration, and I must admit that I know several monks who have the habit of renewing their vows privately once a month. But at the same time I must admit that having visited about 33 houses of our monks in the past year, I can only recall the vows being mentioned once in an explicit way. However, *implicitly*, they give the vows—or,

at least the counsels behind the vows—great importance. The monks are concerned with a personal approach to Christ our Lord in whose life they recognize the three so-called evangelical counsels. They want to live the Gospel in an authentic, personal and positive way, and they see the monastic life as one form of doing this, and so they accept poverty, chastity and obedience as part of this life.”



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Fernand Jetté, Superior General of the Oblates, writes: "In the enquiries held one notes that there is little enough reference made to the vows as such; yet for the great majority there exists a profound thirst for authenticity in that which concerns the reason for pronouncing the vows."

And Albert Tremblay, Superior General of the Christian Brothers, states: "For the great majority of the Brothers, the bond between vows and *"sequela Christi"* does exist, even though they have little concern for syllogistic proofs of its reality. They live their commitment to the best of their ability as a privileged means of following Christ."

It is noteworthy that our Constitutions do give due emphasis to the dimension of *"following Christ"* in several paragraphs of this section: e.g., 9, 10, 16, 19, 20.

The human value in making vows

It is important in our days, it seems to me, to have a motivated insight into the anthropological meaning and value of making vows. I can do no better, in that respect, than to summarize the inspiring article of Paul Wadell, C.P., published in *The Passionist* (n. 9, 1983, p. 80-95): "The Role of Fidelity in Relationships."

He starts by analyzing the concept of "promise" which he sees as a distinctive act of freedom. A promise well made and well kept builds personality like nothing else. It is a mature, full-blown exercise of the deepest meaning of freedom. What is most important to see is that making a promise *follows an experience of value*. Promises can only be made where value has been felt. Promises embody values we want to be part of us. But a promise has no value in itself; rather, it protects a value we find "promising" and want as our own. A promise is freedom's response to a value we have enjoyed and want to bring to fruition in our life. A promise discloses moral vision. We choose some possibilities and we rule out others because of what we value.

Fidelity is part of the promise. We promise because we experience value. But we are also aware of history. We know that in time the value may grow opaque. When making the promise, we foresee the inevitable struggles, crises and temptations of life. Fidelity is the means for dealing with the difficulties of promise-keeping. Fidelity begins when the promise is made because we foresee the tests that lie ahead.

To see the link between promising and being faithful is of the utmost importance. A promise is a witness to value. And fidelity is the intention of the promiser to make that value incarnate. A promise intends fidelity because it expresses the intention of the will to achieve the value. When we give our word in a promise, we hope never to put in doubt what we then intend. We hope the witness of our life to this value will grow.

But an important qualification has to be made here. What we will be able to do in the future depends on the quality of our promise in the present. Promise-keeping is a direct result of promise-making. We can only consecrate our life entirely if we make that promise wholeheartedly. The authenticity of our promise today determines the quality of its future. What is decisive for promise-keeping is the attitude when we make it. If we feel constrained, if we are significantly reluctant, then our promise is crippled. The future of any promise depends on the strength of its original investment.



Conclusion

The preceding reflections are eminently relevant to the understanding of the vows which are a special type of promise. What distinguishes the vow from a promise is that a vow is a promise with a religious dimension. A vow refers the person to the transcendent. A vow is freedom's response to the appeal of God to direct one's life to him. Because a vow is made before God and, in a sense, in His behalf, it suggests a commitment absolute and unyielding.

Humanly, a vow is an impossible project. There is no way a human being can sustain the meaning of a vow. We can only vow ourselves absolutely when we sense we receive the help we need to carry it through. Our vow is bolstered by the help and grace of God. It is true and reassuring that our vows are ultimately supported by the grace of God; but only a person who has faith strong enough to know what the vow involves can truly be said to make a vow. The vow is a beautiful articulation of faith and a beautiful decision of freedom. But it requires mature faith. Promises can be made by mature human beings. But vows can only be made by those strong and living in faith.

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The Preaching of the Passion

While it is relatively easy to demonstrate that the Passion occupies a central place in the gospels, it is extremely difficult to explain the content of the New Testament message about the Passion. "The preaching of the Cross in the New Testament is done in so many different ways that one can barely speak, as some wish, of polyphony. Really, whoever wishes to listen to the whole message would speak about discordance." In addition to this difficulty arising from the texts themselves there is a series of difficulties on the formal level, which on the one hand arise from theology—we shall speak of two theological problems for example—and on the other hand arise from the actual situation in which we live.

I. DIFFICULTIES IN PREACHING THE PASSION TODAY.

1. *Developments in Theology.*

One of the most popular kinds of sermon in the past was the Passion sermon in Lent. During several weeks preaching was focused on a theme of the Passion. The meditations were aimed especially at the psychological or rather sentimental side of the hearers. An effort was made to give a vivid description of the Passion, insisting on the different episodes of the sufferings borne by Jesus. Following a rather old tradition appeal was made to private revelations to supplement what the Scriptures tell us of the Passion. And those were also underlined

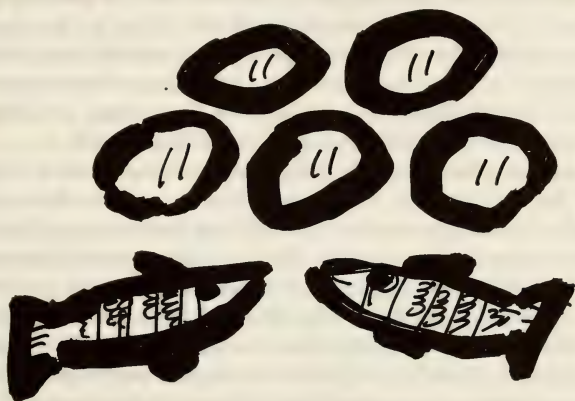
by an exuberant iconography. Preachers sought to express the psychology of the main actors in the drama. By frequent extrapolation fantastic details were given to feed the imagination and add to the dramatic aspect and the tragic aspect of the Passion.

This method of preaching was undermined by the results of historical and critical exegesis of recent times. The critical exegesis showed that while the Passion of Christ is indeed an undeniable historic event, yet what the Evangelists gave was not a documentary report of the events nor an account of the most intimate sentiments of the personages in the drama. The Passion accounts in the Gospels are above and before anything else theological texts. By this I mean that the texts, while speaking of historical events, aim to explain the connection which these events had with our redemption, in other words to give their salvific value. This they did in so complex a fashion that it is impossible to separate the facts from their interpretation. Further, the interpretation was often based upon Old Testament models such as for example, the death of the just man described in the Books of Wisdom and the Psalms, or the suffering servant in the hymns of Deutero-Isaias. This shows that the evangelists were not interested in a psychological analysis nor with concrete or historical details. These exegetical insights rob the classic form of meditation on the Passion of much of its impact.

The second development within theology seriously puts in question the traditional way of preaching the Passion. The image of Jesus in contemporary theological literature must shift our way of looking upon and interpreting the Passion and Death of Jesus. In the past the emphasis was upon the miracles of Jesus as proof of his divinity. The modern emphasis is rather upon the non-conformist side of his conduct: How he went beyond, relativised and criticised the norms of the society in which he lived. The fact that he favoured those that were outside the law, those deprived of rights, the oppressed, etc., is highlighted. His attitude towards sinners, the sick, women and others deprived of power and influence is stressed.

This recent way of looking at the historical Jesus and his way of life, which included a critique of the society in which he lived, does not allow us any longer to regard his death and resurrection as the only decisive events for our salvation. There are those theologians who say that it is not the death of Jesus which saved us, but his liber-

ating behaviour, his defense of the oppressed, his way of going beyond frontiers and limits to break the burden of laws and oppressive customs. If they are asked whether this commitment to liberation goes beyond the action of the historic Jesus, they reply that he set in motion a liberating movement which continues up to today. Within this perspective the death of Jesus is the proof that he defended his cause in an unconditional way. In this false context one no longer speaks of redemption or salvation but rather of liberation or emancipation.



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2. Difficulties posed by the outlook of modern man.

The difficulties faced by one preaching the mystery of the Passion are not limited to those which are raised by recent developments in theology. More immediate problems are posed by the actual urban situation in which most of our people live. In our modern urban culture people have scarcely any direct contact with nature, hence their ability to comprehend the traditional christian language which was forged in an agricultural civilisation is strongly reduced. Daily contact with a nature which dies and is reborn was the starting point for understanding the sublime meaning of the Cross in the days of the New Testament. The Gospel image of the grain of wheat which dies in the earth in order to produce fruit, the vision of nature which dies in winter to be reborn in all its beauty in the spring, are like the immediate data for the subtle dialectic of christian faith.

The traditional language of christian preaching is made still further alien by the use of words which date from a period when social and economic relationships were quite different from those of today. One of the key words used to present the message of the Cross was 'sacrifice.' In the letter to the Romans we read that God set up Christ as a sacrifice of reconciliation (3, 25). And in the letter to the Hebrews, Christ, High-Priest of the happiness to come (9, 11) offered himself as a victim (9, 14). Another important word was 'redemption' by which a slave or prisoner was granted liberty in return for payment, and the New Testament says: Christ paid the price to set us free (Gal 3, 19; 4, 5; 1 Cor 6, 20; 7, 23). These images led to dogmatic formulations which were very subtle and ingenious, e.g., St. Anselm's theory of satisfaction which so profoundly influenced western piety. This theory, however, reflects notions of God and social organization which are quite out of date today. Our sense of democratic justice can hardly accept any longer the notion that the measure of punishment or expiation must be in proportion to the dignity of the one who was offended. We also find the image of a God who demands satisfaction for the offences done to him in contradiction with that which Jesus taught about His Father in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Indeed it may be said that men of today scarcely know what to make of such key words as sacrifice, redemption and satisfaction. These ideas no longer belong to his world of experience. There is a great danger that preaching which con-

tinues to manipulate these images and concepts will no longer touch the man of today so as to arouse his hope. The danger is that we would be offering him answers to questions which are not his and fail to give him a response to the real problems which haunt him.

A further set of difficulties arises from absolutist assertions in the preaching of the Cross. People today have difficulty in accepting the central proposition of the Christian message that all salvation comes from the Cross. They do not find it at all evident that a historic event, transitory and contingent, could have a value which is absolute. When they think of the thousands of crosses which lined the Roman highways, and of the numbers of victims who died in this atrocious way, many ask themselves why it is necessary to attach an absolute value to one cross among so many others. How can this reveal the love of God for man in such a way as to be the foundation of a new covenant and re-establish friendship between God and man?

There is a third human difficulty which we find typical of today: the attitude of modern man towards suffering has changed. In times past, for example, as reflected in the works of Athanasius, Augustine, Thomas and Luther, etc., suffering was not considered as a religious problem but as an integral part of human existence. It was possible to alleviate pain, one might struggle against suffering but one could not eliminate it. Today the attitude towards suffering has changed because of two developments in recent times: 1) The technological possibilities for eliminating pains and sufferings and their causes; 2) The development of anesthetics and narcotics. We no longer consider pain and suffering as a natural element of life but as one that can and should be eliminated. We scarcely accept suffering in our presence; it makes us aggressive. This attitude has various consequences. It is useless to reason about suffering, what must be done is get rid of it. To give meaning to suffering which one is unable to eliminate, therefore, becomes very difficult if not impossible. Even more serious is the tendency to limit the extent of Christian charity to the effort at removing suffering. It no longer makes sense to be a helpless witness beside the bed of suffering. This would be to forget that Jesus was the one who opposed suffering and attempted to get rid of it. And so the tendency grows today to see Jesus precisely as the one who delivers man by his behaviour and his example. The passion and death of Jesus in this way tend to take a less prominent place.



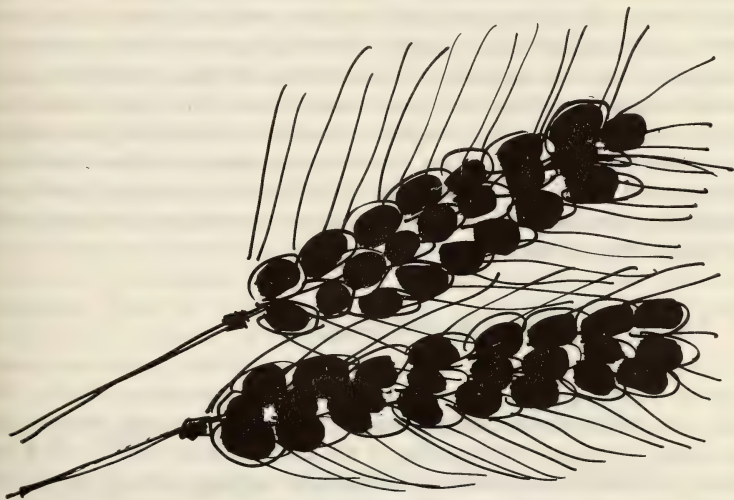
II. POSSIBLE WAYS FOR A MODERN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE PASSION.

Having listed some of the difficulties, and I did not attempt an exhaustive enumeration of them, we can now look at some elements which would help us respond to these difficulties. How to announce in our day the Passion of Christ as Good News?

1. *The preaching of the Passion should be done on a solid theological foundation.*

To preach Jesus Crucified can be authentic only to the degree that we witness to him as the crucified Risen One. In other words, we announce the death of Jesus precisely because the crucified one lives. To the extent that we take this seriously, we are along the line of the New Testament witness concerning the Cross as a saving event. If the disciples had not had the experience that Golgotha was not the end, how could these disappointed men bear witness that the crucified One was such that every tongue should confess the glory of God, that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 2, 11). Only the certainty that He who had died as a malefactor had been established as the prince of life (Acts 3, 15), had opened their eyes to understand what had really happened in the event of the Cross. His resurrection had confirmed in them the conviction that one could no longer speak of Jesus merely in human categories. Hence there arose their double kerygma, he was the man of

Nazareth and of Golgotha, but at the same time, he is the Emmanuel, the God with us and for us. This double kerygma is the archetype of all Christology. Only this Christology will enable us to understand that the Passion and the Death constitute central elements in the Christ fact. And the fact that his death was not the irreparable irreversible end of his life can reveal to us that the death of Jesus was the key event in the salvific design of God.



The preacher cannot properly communicate the New Testament message of the Cross except along an accurate theological line. Without this precision he runs the risk of deforming the Christian message. Such a diminution or distortion is sometimes seen in the approach of those who put the emphasis exclusively on the saving conduct of Jesus, vis-a-vis certain groups in the society of his time. This one-sided way of doing things robs the message of the Cross, the gospels would then become stories about Jesus which end with his death on the Cross, and this death would be considered as the confirmation of what Jesus had lived. This would limit the word of the Cross to a particular notion of conduct. No surprise then if people ask whether

this death doesn't prove precisely the impotence of a love which refuses all violence. The passion and death would become a cause of despair instead of being the foundation of our hope. The destiny of Jesus would be in no way different from the fate of so many other innocent people who died for a superhuman ideal.

In spite of this reservation, however, we should not be unaware of the good that is in this approach. The death upon the Cross cannot be regarded in detachment from the life of Jesus. It remains true that the motif of his life is characterized by his unrelenting search for those who were discriminated against, for religious or social reasons, in contrast to the self-assurance of the devout or the established judgments and accepted norms. Jesus stated clearly that only the love of God is the ultimate force which saves and frees all who appear lost in this world. Within this vision, his cross guarantees us that God loves all, equally. His is a love which in all its intensity and depth comes to fulfillment and is manifested in the active communion of Jesus with all those who are lost.

2. *The need to re-interpret the older categories.*

From what has already been said, it is clear that a new interpretation of ancient categories is both possible and necessary. And in this task, we should not be inhibited by this or that dogmatic phrase. For in regard to the saving meaning of the death of Jesus, the Church has made no other formal declaration than the sentence which we find for the first time in the act of faith of the Council of Constantinople (381): "crucifixus etiam pro nobis," He was crucified for us. According to this statement, the crucifixion of Jesus happened for us, on our behalf. But the definition does not go on to state how we ought to precisely understand the salvific activity of the Cross. It leaves us space and liberty for reflection, which indeed is guaranteed to us already in the holy scripture where we find several interpretations of the sufferings and death of Jesus. The same is true for the history of dogma, where we find different models and theories, of which a list has been drawn up by V. Aulen. The Church never pronounced in a dogmatic definition whether this or that theory is the one which must be held to explain the saving action of Jesus. We can therefore attempt to translate the message of the Cross for the people of our day. Our attitude

should be to take into account all the possibilities which are included in the message of the Passion. We should not hold on stubbornly to ancient forms of devotion but turn our eye to all the possibilities which open up along the line of modern sensibility.

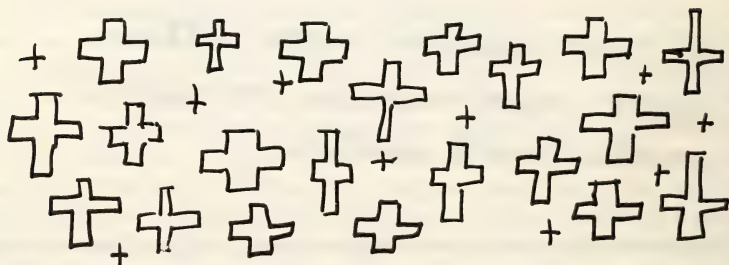
All devotion to the Passion of Christ and consequently all preaching about it should take inspiration from the formula of St. Paul to the Philippians: 'Have this mind amongst you which was also in Christ Jesus. Although he was by nature divine, he did not cling to his equality with God, but he emptied himself taking the condition of a servant and becoming like men' (Phil. 2, 5-7). This 'having the mind of Christ' found an echo in a form of compassion which in certain cases, like St. Francis, went as far as physical similarity with the stigmata. This suffering with, this 'compassio,' is characterized by an ardent desire to identify oneself as far as possible with the Passion, both interior and exterior. This devotion articulates itself as an imitation (Mimesis) and seeks to create between Christ and the privileged soul a bond comparable to that of the copy with the model. Such devotion and preaching is only possible in a Christianity which places its emphasis upon the incarnation of God. The Passion reveals how much God is 'human'; it reveals a God who feels.

*In our modern urban culture
people have scarcely any direct
contact with nature.*

But there is another way of living and preaching the Passion which also answers the formula: 'Have that mind amongst you which was also in Christ Jesus.' Here, the effort is not to reproduce the model of the suffering Christ in its historical materiality, but rather to respond to the appeal of which an echo is given in the final judgment scene in Matthew's Gospel: 'I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was a stranger and you took me in; I was naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me; a prisoner and you came to me' (Mt. 25, 35-36).

What the text suggests is this: our response to Jesus should not be a desire to reproduce his passion, but to turn our thought from his Passion and direct it to 'other than him who far from being merely his reproductions, are authentic forms of a new suffering and impoverishment which we risk neglecting in favour of our repeated thinking about the past' (S. Breton). In this context, we may think of what Jesus said on the way of the Cross: 'Women of Jerusalem, weep not for me but rather for your children.'

In this piety attention is directed not so much to the 'Christus Patiens' to appropriate the Passion of Christ, but more towards the other who suffers and to whom Christ as it were lends his own identity, his name, his Me. Christ is no longer an object of com-passion, but he assumes a functional role, that is, he becomes as an energy allowing us to transform the world and to complete the work of transformation which he set in motion. This allows us to develop quite a different spirituality but one which is also replete with biblical values. While compassion focuses more upon the suffering servant, the new form of living the Passion animates us with a certain prophetic fury to struggle against evil, to root out suffering, and to commit ourselves deeply to the establishment of greater justice.



Confrontation with the Passion of Christ as it is revealed in the passion of our neighbour does not demand a stupid belief in progress which would consider suffering simply as a detestable reality to be rooted out. The vision of a world of justice and peace is not precisely the same as looking for a situation free of suffering, at least if we wish to avoid letting our ideas generate into an apotheosis of banality' (J.B.

Metz). Human history will always be marked by suffering. Yet despite this, Christianity does not embrace an ideology of apathy and sorrow. The genuine Christian struggles against suffering but he struggles also against this anonymous mentality which denies or forbids suffering in grief in our progressive society. He carries on the struggle, not by establishing an abstract cult of suffering, but by sensitizing people, enabling them to compassionate with the suffering of their neighbour. Thus man becomes capable of suffering for the other and to come very close to the mystery of the Passion of Christ. "Without this capacity for compassion there may indeed still be progress in technology and civilization, but the deeper realities of truth and liberty will lag behind."

Some of the efforts which are made to avoid and eliminate suffering are false and inauthentic. The struggle against hunger, sickness, oppression and war must, of course, be applauded. 'But it can very well be that in many cases all we are doing is shifting the burden of suffering. We protect our own people against hunger but, by that very act, we create famine in other parts of the world. We immunize ourselves against the plague, but we become extremely susceptible to the maladies of civilization. We continually shift around the burden of human suffering upon the backs of others or towards other areas of our life and then, prematurely, think we have overcome suffering.' It is for this reason that Moltmann believes we ought to recover our capacity for suffering ('leidensfähigkeit'). The ideal of western progress, of a pleasant life untroubled by sorrow, cannot be sustained because this increases still further the burden of suffering for others in the world. Such results cannot be dismissed as simple regrettable concomitants. They are rather the real price that was paid. The ideal of a life without sorrow renders one group of people apathetic and brutal towards other groups who are made to bear the cost. Making others bear the cost of our progress becomes unbearable for both sides. Humanity has a future only in so far as it desires a common future and wishes this without imposing death and sufferings upon any party. It is necessary that those who are presently able to act should re-discover the sense of suffering.'

And so we can see more clearly the critical element in our preaching redemption through the Cross. The Cross cannot give a facile answer. As symbol of the most extreme suffering, it forbids us to flee

from suffering. Looking upon the Crucified can strengthen people to bear their suffering and give them the possibility of overcoming it. The Cross is the sign of ultimate solidarity. The Saviour has shared in our distress. Aware of this union, we can keep our head clearly and confidently amidst all the tension, wounds and sorrows of life.



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JAMES DEMANUELE, C.P.

Towards a Liturgical Spirituality of the Cross

We Passionists possess a unique spirituality given us by St. Paul of the Cross which we have incarnated in our lives for more than two hundred fifty years. This spirituality of the Cross finds expression in all liturgical celebrations: the Lord's Supper, our common prayer, and our participation in the Sacramental life of the Church. And yet so very little has been written. As the title of this paper suggests, what is written here is only a beginning point. It is not a scholarly treatise, but rather a reflection by one of the "little ones" of this "least community." This reflection is meant to be a springboard to further thought.

What concerns us here is the relationship between liturgical prayer, particularly the Eucharist, and our lives as Passionists. The two are woven together inextricably to form a single fabric. What we celebrate in our worship is our lives surrendered, transformed and shared in the person, ministry and destiny of Jesus of Nazareth. The worship experience is a symbol, a crystallization of what our lives are about as individuals, community and Church. What we ritualize in our worship is our experience of a life process. Experience precedes ritual and what is ritualized is the process of transformation.

Let us step back a moment and examine this process of transformation. Rosemary Haughton, in her book, *The Transformation of Man*, writes of the life process. She notes that life has a cyclic nature about it and she offers a model to illustrate her point. An individual feels okay about him/herself: life has meaning and direction. Then some crisis occurs . . . be it the crisis of the death of a loved one, a change in job

or ministry, a graduation, anything that disrupts the normal flow of things. With this crisis, life seems to go haywire. That which once made sense now seems meaningless. The individual longs for a return to order and sensibility. Life has ceased to be okay. Not much can be done at this time except to wander in the fog. In time, an adjustment occurs. The pieces fit together and life makes sense once again. The individual does not make this happen . . . it just seems to happen. The individual breathes a sigh of relief and hopes he/she will never have to go through that again. The present state of "okayness" becomes the setup for the next crisis.



Marriage Encounter offers another model. A couple meet and fall in love. They can be heard to say that he/she is the most wonderful person in the world. They marry . . . and in about eight months they can be heard saying things very unlike earlier conversations. A time of disillusionment has set in. At this point, the couple could be driven apart by the disillusionment, as statistics indicate, or they can "hang in there." If they choose to stay together, there can be a break-through to a new experience of romance. At this point even though he/she has faults and idiosyncrasies, he still loves, and she still cares. And, again we have a set up for the next disillusionment.

A third model begins when the experience of life moves through suffering and death and breaks through to a new experience of life. This is the Jesus model.

Each of these three models offers insight into our life cycle. The word cycle here may be misleading. It does not refer to a never-ending circle, but rather a spiral that has a beginning point and an end point. Each time we go through the cycle, we are changed in some

way. Each time we go through the trauma, the disillusionment, the death and the breakthrough, we come out altered.

Throughout history there have been those who have noted this cyclic nature of life. Some have called it good or bad luck, or fate. Some have said that the cycle is unavoidable, and at best tolerated or at worst run from at all costs. What marks us as Christians is the way we appropriate this cyclic nature. We name it Paschal Mystery, the dying and rising of Jesus played out in our lives. And we claim that this Paschal Mystery with its suffering and death is to be embraced. We believe that it is through this process that we are transformed into the image of Christ. We encounter the living God in the events and people of our lives, in suffering and in joy. Hence, we face life with hope. This hope often times squeaks rather than echoes, but a hope that is present nonetheless.

*As Passionist Religious, "we
seek the unity of our lives
and apostolate in the
passion of Jesus" —*

It is through this death-life process that we Christians believe we are transformed into the image of the crucified yet risen Lord. "We become like him in his death so that we may be like him in his resurrection" (Romans 6:5).

This life process or Paschal Mystery is at the center of all liturgical celebrations. All prayer, common or private, has at its core the mystery of death and resurrection. In faith we ritualize the process and identify it with the Lord sharing His dying and rising. It is a process begun at birth and only completed on the other side of the Jordan, "when we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him face to face" (I John 3:1-3). As we live through the process we celebrate it. And we claim that, with the Lord who is broken as bread and poured out like wine, we too share the same destiny.

As Passionist Religious, "we seek the unity of our lives and aposto-

late in the Passion of Jesus" (C.D.). Our spirituality focuses on the Lord's suffering, not so much as a historical event confined to a particular time and a particular place but as an ongoing event in the lives of His people. We see in the Cross of Christ the promise of Triumph, and we desire to conform ourselves to Christ crucified by sharing in His mission. Our cross-centered spirituality is but another expression of the Paschal Mystery. We look to the cross with Our Founder and claim "Therein lies my hope." We know that the cross of Jesus is the Father's ultimate statement of love.

We Passionists, as the whole Christian Community, are called to the Cross of Christ in our lives. We are called to struggle "to die with Him, so as to rise with Him, to endure with Him so as to reign with Him" (II Timothy 2:12). But as Passionists we are called to proclaim that Cross, "to proclaim with insistence that the Passion of Jesus, the greatest and most overwhelming manifestation of God's love, is the most efficacious remedy to the evils that afflict our world" (C.D.). We proclaim that the tragedies and the sufferings that all encounter are part of the life cycle and we name it "Paschal Mystery." It is a vision of Crucified Love.

To be Proclaimers of the Paschal Mystery for the church requires that we know well His cross. How can we presume to proclaim His Passion to others if we have not first experienced it, and continue to experience it in our own lives? We are commissioned by our special vow to be a sacrament of His Cross and Resurrection, a cross and resurrection that makes itself known in our own individual pain, in the messy affairs of our living together, and in the ministry. We come to know His cross and His promise as we struggle with human frailty and sin in ourselves and our brothers. In the struggle, we know that through it we are being transformed into His image.

It is as a community with this weighty commission and with our frailties and brokenness that we gather around the Lord's Table. We gather to remember, to make anamnesis of Him, and in doing so we claim that story as our own as well as that of the church. We celebrate the death and resurrection of Christ made flesh once again within us all. We recall God's saving work made known in Christ. And we know that God is making that saving work known in us throughout the cycles of our lives. We are a community who claim transformation as our own.

JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!

The story of Jesus is expressed ritually in both a word and bread broken for us. St. Paul's letter to the Philippians expresses this well: "Though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather, he emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that he humbled himself, obediently accepting even death, death of a cross! Because of this, God highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name above every other name. So that at Jesus' name every knee must bend in the heavens, on the earth, and under the earth, and every tongue proclaim to the glory of God the father: JESUS CHRIST IS LORD!"

Jesus is who He is because of His obedience to the Father's will. He is to be "poured out" and shared. The hymn Paul uses in his letter is prefaced by the injunction, "Have in you the same mind of Christ" (Philippians 2:5). As the Lord does, so must we. We are called to transformation, to become bread for the world. And the arena for this passage is our shared life and ministry. His story becomes flesh in our seeking to live together and to proclaim His cross. Our very identity

as Passionists finds itself expressed as we willingly enter into His Passion and celebrate that entrance at His table.

The Cross of Jesus is at the center of all our liturgical celebration, for it is the axis on which all life revolves. It is the pain of our lives. It is also the promise of victory. As Passionists we find our integrity in that cross and in the ritual celebration of the life process, of which the cross is the primary symbol. We witness to the power of the Cross in our various ministries, and are nourished at His table as we celebrate who we are in Christ. Our charism is to witness the mystery of death and life in our lives and ministry, to proclaim to all, the Love of God in Christ Crucified.



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The Liturgy of the Hours: Towards Theological and Practical Reflection

One Passionist Scripture professor was fond of saying "nomen est omen." What we name someone or call something indicates its identity and its meaning. As church we now name our gathering for celebrating morning and evening the Liturgy of the Hours. Its identity is liturgy, public work. The specific worship we do focuses on the pivotal times of morning and evening, the middle of the day and night as well as the vigil keeping that is done during the night.

New naming does not erase old language. When we listen carefully to our heritage, we hear Passionists calling this "the observance" or we are "keeping the observance." Sometimes one hears that we are going to the "divine office." Liturgy is not a text but it is action which uses textual tools. What we now call "Christian Prayer" or the "Book of the Hours" has been called the Breviary and the Office Book. The former conjures up images of the cleric "saying his breviary," fulfilling his clerical obligation alone and from start to finish in one holy walk. The latter evokes ancient monks or desert hermits coming together as a synaxis, an assembled church. Sometimes this assembly is composed of monk and local church members. Sometimes this assembly is pictured as early medieval figures like Bernard, William and Guerric cordoned off from a larger world in pursuit of God.

What we call this liturgy (a word we often have reduced to eucharistic assembling) and what names we give its textual tools gives us

some clues as to what mindset is operative in local community. Present revision of the Liturgy of the Hours combines eastern and western heritages. Its developments, arising out of the Lord's Prayer and the desire for unceasing communion with God, expressed themselves according to local ecclesial need and the charisms of various pray-ers. We now have available scholarly work tracing the developments in both cathedral, parochial celebration and in monastic, *opus dei* celebration.¹ No one period and no one style has been raised to canonical status. Thus we are discovering that the research into these developments indicates that the past is complicated when we try to unravel it and that we shall want to exercise good judgement in how we use this past.



This essay is not concerned primarily with the varied liturgical developments. Instead, coming from an active apostolic experience of Passionist life, I would like to ask two questions. How can we reflect on the Hours, especially morning prayer and evening prayer? What practical elements do we need to consider in order to shape our doing these liturgies?

Theological Reflection: Thinking About the Hours

The Liturgy of the Hours is rooted in our experience of the passage of time. What is our human experience of dawn and daybreak? Light begins to enter into the midst of waning darkness. The sun arises. New creation gives its first yawn, then springs up. Experiences of night's darkness are varied. Sometimes it is freighted with worry, fear or sleeplessness. Sometimes it is felt as rest and refreshment. When night's darkness yields to light, both cosmos and creatures awaken. Both pass over the threshold (the *limen*) unto a new day.

What is our human experience of dusk and evening? We find the sun has crossed from east to west. We have done many tasks and

completed much work. This is clear in rural and agrarian societies. We admit that electricity and technology allow us to continue work and even begin some tasks even after evening has settled in. Nonetheless the evening meal and the descent of darkness leave their impact upon us. Cosmos and creatures enter into some rest, leisure or relaxation—at least sometimes. Both pass over the threshold (the *limen*) which signals the ending of negotiating human enterprise and the conclusion of work tasks.

It is important that we not minimize our human experience of the passage of time in dawn and dusk, morning and evening. In fact, we are attentive by naming these two liturgies morning prayer and evening prayer. These two liturgies are hinges, pivotal turning points for us.

... One need this alerts us to is a gathering together of sources on the Passion from the bible, devotional literature, poetry, music and the arts, especially painting and sculpture....

Because christian liturgy is not rooted in a nature religion, it soon took these two moments and fashioned these two rhythms of life by connecting them with Gospel event. Each morning liturgy made assembled pray-ers conscious of God as creator of a new creation. Liturgical celebration made christians aware of Jesus the Risen Lord. Thus this liturgy uses some invitatory ritual to begin the new day and the assembly arises to sing the canticle of Zechariah. Each evening liturgy made assembled pray-ers conscious of giving thanks for the giftedness of the day and how christians acted as disciples and working servants to fashion the world creatively. Thus this liturgy uses an offering of evening incense to express thanks and to ask forgiveness if christians have acted as unprofitable servants. And the assembly

arises to sing the canticle of Mary. Both liturgical hinges revolve around christian, ecclesial participation in the glorious passover of Jesus. We have named this paschal mystery.

If then the liturgies of morning prayer and evening prayer are participation in the paschal mystery, how can we reflect on the connection of Christ with the human phenomena of light and darkness thresholds?

Ignatius of Antioch offers some insight when he affirms an incarnational stance against docetist tendencies: "the Virginity of Mary and her giving birth eluded the ruler of this age, likewise also the death of the Lord — three mysteries of a cry which were done in the stillness of God (*Ep. ad Eph.* 19, 1)." God has acted out of divine stillness. This action is revelation, i.e., "there is one God who revealed himself through Jesus Christ his Son, who is his Word which proceeded from silence, who in every way pleased the one who sent him (*Ep. ad Mag.* 8, 2)." Divine stillness was divine silence. But God did not remain aloof or inaccessibly transcendent. God acted in speaking the Word made flesh. This action gave christians and all peoples the person of Jesus who underwent his glorious passover and now gives us access to divine silence. He does this as high priest so that priestly people offer word and action of praise through the Word now glorified and acting as melody and song before his Father. He does this as head of his body, as sacred vine united with branches. "May each of you remained joined in chorus, that being harmonious in concord, receiving God's variations in unity, you may sing with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father (*Ep ad Eph.* 4, 2)."



Thus Ignatius' insight gives us a foundation for liturgical celebrations of morning and evening founded in the paschal mystery. God

offered the Word out of silence and this enfleshed Word makes christian pray-ers the chorus of God so that we sing through Jesus Christ, the high priest who is the eternal melody of God. This activity requires an ability to dwell in God's silence: "One who truly possesses the word of Jesus is able also to hear his silence, that that one may be perfect, that that one may act through what one says, and may be known through that in which one is silent (*Ep. ad Eph.* 15, 2)." It also requires that the public song of praise, the melody of morning prayer and evening prayer liturgies be truly liturgy, i.e., that it be done as an assembly which uses various roles. "It is right for you to run together with the purpose of the bishop, which you indeed do; for your worthily reputed presbytery, worthy of God, is attuned to the bishop like strings to a cithara; therefore, in your concord and harmonious love, Jesus Christ is sung (*Ep. ad Eph.* 4, 1)."²

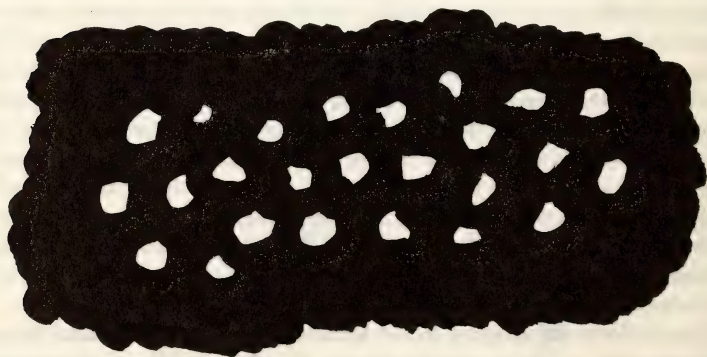
Ignatius' writings provide a framework for thinking about morning and evening liturgy grounded in the paschal mystery. It might be summed up in this way. God dwells in stillness and silence. Yet God did not decide to remain aloof from cosmos or creatures. God chose to act, to break through silence by sending the Word out of silence. This Word is flesh, Jesus, born of Mary the virgin and the one who was attuned to God so perfectly that he accepted his death on the cross. This death was a glorious passover. Through this death he handed over his Spirit to enable his followers to sing his melody, to voice his praise and to act through his high priesthood. This christian response requires that christians dwell in silence, hear the word and return praise and thanks at morning and evening. These two liturgies require that each person sings according to a melody learned in silence and that each person joins his or her voice to the chorus of God, the assembly, united with a presider who acts *in persona Christi*, the high priest and the heavenly melody before the Father.

This reflection can echo in the hearts of all Passionists because our heritage calls for silence and solitude joined with liturgical song and ministerial speech. A life rhythm of silence and personal memorializing of Jesus' glorious passover is responded to with our assembling for morning and evening liturgies and ministerial service and preaching. Out of the ambience of solitude we hear the Word and we then voice that Word in worship and ministerial proclamation.³

This is consonant with the *Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours*

(1971). Both silence, rooted in *lectio divina*⁴ and in personal prayer, and liturgical action, rooted in morning and evening prayer as well as eucharistic tablesharing, focus on the paschal mystery. We are quickened by the Spirit in order to make memorial of the Lord Jesus, the Son of God who fashioned the sun, the melody of God through whom we, priestly people, offer song of evening thanks. We cleave to Christ who teaches a spirituality that is humanly affective and evocative. Thus our liturgies of morning and evening will use light and incense as well as word and song to move our hearts' affections. Public ritual will evoke tender union with God (traditionally associated with the *Song of Songs* tradition), will objectify our devotional service (traditionally associated with passion preaching) and will spur future vision (traditionally associated with our identifying with the crucified of the world who are invited to share in the melody of the Lamb once slain).

We cannot leave off with theological reflexion. If this reflection proves helpful to liturgical celebration, then it contains implications for Passionist celebrations of the hours of morning and evening.

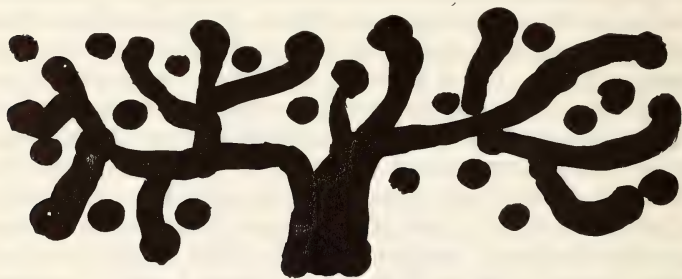


Practical Reflection: Doing the Hours

What practical elements might Passionist communities want to consider in order to celebrate the liturgies of morning and evening prayer well?

1. Much of Passionist mission in the wider church is expressed through devotional preaching and devotional prayer.⁵ Devotional styles are different from liturgical styles. Devotional prayer is often the same in format; it often uses repetition. Most important is the reality that devotional prayer is done by all; there are no distinctive roles such as we have in liturgical celebration. Because our devotional ministry and praying are significant, this style can easily cross over into liturgical action. This is not to say that liturgy is devoid of devotional affection. It is to say that liturgy is different. It requires varied roles which arise out of the primary ministerial group, the assembly. Liturgical style requires special ministers who serve the assembly. Thus we need readers, those trained with the skills of communicating biblical story. Ordinarily bible storytelling is done, not from one's place in choir or church, but from a highly visible reading stand we call ambo. We need cantors, choir and musicians. Liturgy is intrinsically musical. It uses hymns, psalms, canticles and intercessory petitions. This does not mean that everything needs to be fully sung everyday (see #4 below). It does mean that we train musicians or hire church musicians in order to worship well. The anomalies of an assembly reciting a hymn or the use of electronic music boxes just will not do! Liturgy requires skilled intercessory prayers who can speak or sing these biddings well. Attention must be given to the nature of the intercessions at morning prayer and evening prayer. They are different. The former relate the assembly to the new creation and the consecration of the day to God and God's designs. The latter, akin to the petitions at eucharistic tablesharing, concretize human and global need. Even these latter biddings are oft loaded down into inane, though highly personal petitions or into words of thanksgiving which are not petitions. Finally our liturgies require a presider. This presider may be male or female, ordained or non-ordained according to the tradition of this prayer. This presider is not the "celebrant." He or she is presider, leader, the one who keeps the pace of the liturgy going, calls the assembly to pray, sums up its silent prayer with public oration and concludes the assembly's worship with oration, blessing and sending forth. This role might also include some preaching since some celebrations, especially those of Sunday, the Paschal Triduum and solemn feasts, will call for some breaking of the Word for the assembly. This ministry is one that has been dominated by males and

modeled by eucharistic presidential style. What this means when females preside at the liturgy of the hours or when they preach the word remains to be seen. Certainly some might hope that they would not ape inadequate modeling sometimes seen presently.



2. No liturgical celebration can be fruitful without some attention to how we keep vigils. Each Passionist can relate to the vigil keeping done by intimates of Jesus as he underwent his own prayerful wrestling in the garden before his death. We can also relate to the significant vigilance the Gospels call us to immediately before the Passion narrative begins in the Gospel traditions. How we use silence and solitude, how we develop *lectio divina* will give clues to wholesome public prayer. One need this alerts us to is a gathering together of sources on the Passion from bible, devotional literature, poetry, music and the arts, especially painting and sculpture. This thesaurus could help us memorialize the Passion both personally and communally.

3. The Roman rite tradition is known for its pruned, simple, even austere use of language in public orations. It is also known for its divine address. Orations often began with *Deus qui* or *Domine, Deus qui*. How we address God (Jesus simply said "Abba") may indicate how we are robust wrestlers with God in our religious life and public service. This vertical address alerts us to what is at stake, i.e., orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is rooted in right praise and apt naming of the Triune God. Jesus, a male, has often been spoken of as a crucified one, a male, and as mother, a female. Various eras of christian spirituality did not feel uncomfortable with seeing him transcending gender as the Christ. Some attempts⁶ risk inaccurate naming of God (e.g., when we call

God the Creator, Jesus the Redeemer and the Spirit the Sanctifier, we risk falling into an unacceptable modalism). Language is not only vertical; it relates to how we address one another. In a faith community which began as an egalitarian association of evangelical equals,⁷ it seems odd that we are not attentive to be careful how we address one another or speak scriptures that are inclusive.⁸ Equally strange is a lack of attention in a religious heritage of Passionist brothers and presbyters, nuns and sisters.

4. The General Instruction (#273) aids our celebration by offering us the principle of progressive solemnity. Not every morning and evening prayer admits to the same degree of celebration. Variety can be handsomely used according to the day, liturgical season or calendar designation. Concretely this means that Sunday is more important than an ordinary day. Lent, Triduum and Paschal/Easter season each admits to variety of ceremony and celebration, to difference in style and mood conveyed. Solemn feasts are solemnly celebrated. Obligatory memorials differ from optional ones. This principle of progressive solemnity also depends on a particular community's abilities and needs, its size and how it plans these liturgies vis-a-vis its ministerial commitments. (This follows on current writing about the difference between monastic apostolic religious and active apostolic religious.)⁹



5. Since we live in a world of limited resources and monies, we shall want to plan how to allot funding for the re-doing of Passionist

worship space in Passionist parishes, local communities and retreat centers. Shaping our space will enhance the spirit of Passionist hospitality and will mirror the kind of ecclesiology we want to offer others as well as ourselves. The arrangement of space in some places can only strike the eye as curious. For example, some spaces are arranged so that the assembly can face and see one another and the action going on. Other spaces focus attention on altar table and reserved eucharistic sacrament. Some, most curiously, combine the two! Unless we think about this and act well, we may run the risk of celebrating the hours in a way that is redolent of an earlier rubricism, of a mindset that 'gets it in' and cuts us off from the cosmic realities of dawn and dusk, morning and evening.

6. Renewal of this liturgy will entail a respect for the integrity of the hours of morning and evening prayer as legitimate liturgy in itself. Our tendency to combine either hour with eucharistic tablesharing often means a worship that is overly verbal and awkwardly mixed. We need to discuss keeping the hours and eucharist distinct in order to maintain integrity for each. In addition to integrity, we need to consider how we stylize these liturgies. Liturgy is more than verbal and more than textual. It is action that uses varied body postures; it is music that prays the psalms (using various ways). It is ritual action which lights evening lamps and offers evening incense. We seem uncomfortable with ritual making. Elimination of ritual action may mean an alienation from those natural symbols of holy smoke, brightly lit space, ample running water and aromatic oil and oiling that are the stuff of christian worship. The General Instruction (#18) refers to this liturgy as the wellspring of christian life. It cannot be that oasis and wellspring without ritual action that draws water from the desert rock or inserts us into the wounded side of Jesus crucified.

7. Morning and evening prayer are liturgies of conversion. Night turns into day and daylight crosses over into night. How we celebrate these conversional moments will depend on our use of symbols and images. We live in a world in which the images that shape us are often secular and inimical to Gospel values. How we use natural symbols and how we connect them with bible meaning will determine our conversion of life. This will mean an attention by Passionists to what aesthetic and affection are conveyed by our worship. It will mean attention to the kind and quality of sacred art we use both in worship space

and in our dwelling places. It will mean what kind of commitment we make to the study of sacred scripture, especially the psalms, so that the sentiments of bible may convert the images which motivate, cultivate and nurture our vocation and mission in our world.

It is important that we not minimize our human experience of the passage of time in dawn and dusk, morning and evening.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Two valuable pieces are Paul F. Bradshaw. *Daily Prayer in the Early Church* London, SPCK (Alcuin Club), 1981 and Robert Taft, S.J. *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West* Collegeville, MN, The Liturgical Press, 1986. Both provide ample bibliography for further study.
- 2 William R. Schoedel. *Ignatius of Antioch, A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch*. Philadelphia, Fortress, 1985.
- 3 One might find other christian traditions offering valuable materials on the role of silence for group meaning, identity and gospel purpose in its world. See Richard Bauman. *Let Your Words Be Few*, Symbolism of speaking and silence among 17-century Quakers. Cambridge, CUP, 1983.
- 4 See Jean Leclercq "Lectio Divina" *Worship* 58 (1984) 239 *et seq.*
- 5 See Carl Dehne "Roman Catholic Popular Devotions" in John Gallen, S.J., ed. *Christians At Prayer* Notre Dame, UND P, 1977, 83-99.
- 6 See Gail Ramshaw-Schmidt *Christ in Sacred Speech* Philadelphia, Fortress, 1986.
- 7 See Sandra Schneiders "Evangelical Equality" *Spirituality Today* 38 (1986) 293-302.

- 8 See Vivienne Faull and Jane Sinclair *Count Us In—Inclusive Language in Liturgy* Nottingham, Grove Liturgical Study #46, Grove Books, 1986.
- 9 See George A. Aschenbrenner, S.J. "Active and Monastic: Two Apostolic Lifestyles" *Review for Religious* 45 (1986) 653-668.

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A World Split Apart

Book Review: Ronald Berman (ed.), *Solzhenitsyn at Harvard: The Address, Twelve Early Responses, and Six Later Reflections*. Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1980.

In June, 1978, Alexander Solzhenitsyn delivered his now famous commencement address at Harvard University. This book contains that speech and the later reflections of twenty commentators ranging from journalists to scholars. It would be a mistake to equate this talk with the political statement of Winston Churchill at Fulton, Missouri, when he informed his audience that an Iron Curtain had descended across the continent of Europe. Rather, thirteen years after Vatican II Solzhenitsyn is echoing much that the pastoral constitution, "The Church in the Modern World," tried to tell us. Unlike John XXIII and the bishops in council, S. does not emphasize the *gaudium et spes* (joy and hope) theme: i.e., the spiritual opportunity of the *kairos*. Rather, more in the spirit of Kierkegaard, he emphasizes *angor et luctus* (griefs and anxieties): i.e., the crisis nature of the *kairos*. Our prosperous culture has received the Russian prophet's message much as the comfortable Christians of Kierkegaard's era received him.

For easier comprehension the address may be divided into six parts: e.g., (1) the present world situation, (2) the West as S. sees it, (3) the abuses of the press in a democracy and the confused role of intellectuals, (4) S.'s opposition to *both* democracy and socialism, (5) the West's duty to preserve freedom, and (6) S.'s analysis of contemporary secular humanism. The real substance of S.'s diagnosis is to be found in the sixth section where he refers to "the calamity of an autonomous, irreligious humanistic consciousness" (p. 19). The rest of the

speech is simply a catalogue of the surface symptoms of this root cancer which is common to both East and West, Communism and Capitalism.

The present world situation

What is extremely refreshing about S.'s reflections is that he takes a *global* view. The contemporary fixation of special interest groups is totally foreign to him. In this regard his thought is comparable to that of John XXIII in *Humanae Salutis*, the apostolic constitution whereby the pope convoked the council in 1961. Although S. begins his talk with what seems to be just another socio-political analysis of the clash between the two super-powers and their allies, he is really analysing the pockets of consciousness and their self-contained cultures which make up today's divided world. In this regard he much resembles Vatican II's sensitivity to local cultures and John Paul II's emphasis on cultural discernment and the principle of enculturation. Unlike John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris*, S. does not place any reliance in a "theory of convergence" between the West and the Soviet Union, nor the convergence of other countries toward democratic ideals. Yet, there really is no conflict between these two diagnoses. S. is taking a short-term realistic view of political matters, whereas John XXIII is taking the hope-filled, long-range view of a renewal program transcending politics while yet working toward the "unity of mankind."

Contemporary secular humanism

S.'s global view of contemporary events is also that of a religious philosopher. He takes the long view of history and traces today's distorted humanism back to the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. This is certainly true in terms of intellectual history. Perhaps one of the best recent books tracing this development is William Barrett's *Death of the Soul: From Descartes to the Computer* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1986). Many of us, however, are not familiar with this intellectual history, nor are we familiar with the process whereby ostensibly neutral and abstract scientific ideas have been manipulated since the seventeenth century for radical political purposes. An informed book in this regard would be Margaret C. Jacob's

The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981).



To a large extent, what we have also forgotten today is that the pioneers of the "new science" undergirding modern secular humanism were Catholics. Two notable names in this regard would be René Descartes (mathematics) and Giambattista Vico (history). Since both conducted their reflections within a Catholic culture, they did not read into their speculations the agnostic implications which modern thinkers read into today's natural sciences and historical studies. The beginning of this trend was precipitated by the psychological reflections of David Hume (1711-1776) who questioned the notion of causality and thus brought into doubt the achievements of Newtonian science. It was Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who seemed to have resolved the difficulties proposed by Hume, but by 1850 his philosophical synthesis largely fell apart under the impact of Darwinism, the new Non-Euclidean mathematics, the social upheaval of the Industrial Revolution, and the rise of Marxism. As a result, the natural sciences, history and psychology, as we know them today, have developed over a century's intellectual environment of evolutionism and materialism. It is the social history of these materialistic influences which accounts for today's "calamity of an autonomous, irreligious

humanistic consciousness." To the extent we are uninformed regarding this quite recent development in human history we are in danger of being absorbed by this larger, all-pervasive culture and are unconsciously preempted by its materialistic value-system. It is, for example, sometimes difficult to distinguish church organizational models from that of General Motors at prayer, or grassroots evangelical movements from that of Marxist class struggles. S.'s reflections, and that of Vatican II, have as their intention to break the naturalistic preconceptions we so take for granted.

The effects of secular humanism

As S. sees it, secular humanism has had the following deleterious effects:

It has made man the measure of all things on earth—imperfect man, who is never free of pride, self-interest, envy, vanity, and dozens of other defects. We are now paying for the mistakes which were not properly appraised at the beginning of the journey. On the way from the Renaissance to our days we have enriched our experience, but we have lost the concept of a Supreme Complete Entity which used to restrain our passions and our irresponsibility. We have placed too much hope in politics and social reforms, only to find out that we were being deprived of our most precious possession: our spiritual life. It is trampled by the party mob in the East, by the commercial one in the West. *This is the essence of the crisis: the split in the world is less terrifying than the similarity of the disease afflicting its main sections.* (Emphasis added.)

Within the above context the other criticisms of S. make sense: the West's decline in courage, its unrestrained "pursuit of happiness," the poverty of its legal positivism, the misuse of the mass media, intellectual faddism, the misguided conceptions of socialism and democracy, political shortsightedness in world affairs, and a pervasive loss of will. Since this malaise infects both the Capitalism of the West and the Communism of the East, the only "advantage" which Marxism enjoys is that its totalitarian organization focuses its human and material resources more effectively for long term confrontation. In view of such a situation S.'s final summation is essentially that of Vatican II and every pope since John XXIII: "Today it would be retrogressive to

hold on to the ossified formulas of the Enlightenment. Such social dogmatism leaves us helpless before the trials of our times" (p. 19).

The ascension is similar
to climbing onto the next
anthropological stage. No
one on earth has any
other way left but upward.



The renewal of mankind

"The trials of our times" provide the context for S.'s proposed remedy. His suggestions are spiritually akin to those of Vatican II, and within this same context our own *memoria passionis* assumes its authentic sense and contemporary relevance. Similar to Paul VI, S. implies we should be working toward a "civilization of love." Or, as John Paul II suggests, we should be moving toward a "civilization of work" and a new Christian anthropology. S.'s remarks, much like Vatican II, suggest a vision of a new humanity: an innovative and creative enterprise of the Christian spirit in the twentieth century. To convey the thrust of his ideas I simply quote his concluding remarks:

Even if we are spared destruction by war, life will have to change in order not to perish on its own. We cannot avoid reassessing the fundamental

definitions of human life and human society. Is it true that man is above everything? Is there no Superior Spirit above him? Is it right that man's life and society's activities should be ruled by material expansion above all? Is it permissible to promote such expansion to the detriment of our integral spiritual life?

If the world has not approached its end, it has reached a major watershed in history, equal in importance to the turn from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. It will demand from us a spiritual blaze; we shall have to rise to a new height of vision, to a new level of life, where our physical nature will not be cursed, as in the Middle Ages, but even more importantly, our spiritual being will not be trampled upon, as in the Modern Era.

The ascension is similar to climbing onto the next anthropological stage. No one on earth has any other way left but—upward.

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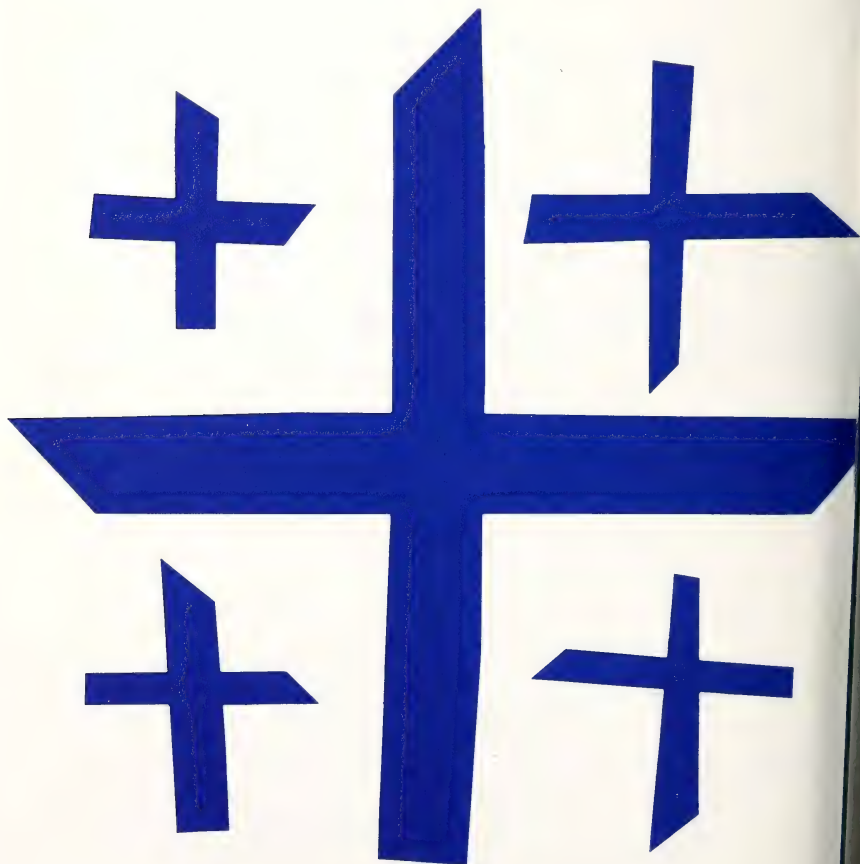
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a review of community life, apostolate and spirituality of the Congregation of the Passion, published for the english-reading world community of Passionists





The Passionist

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PREFACE

The articles in this issue of *The Passionist* explore various elements in our experience of being Passionist.

The first is by Fr. Paul Wadell, C.P. in which he develops his conviction that "the moral life for Passionists is a matter of living in such a way, that, gradually and most often vary haltingly, we are changed into the kind of people who can see that the God of the crucified Jesus is the God who is hidden away in the suffering people of the earth." This presentation was originally given at the Institutes on Passionist Life and Ministry which were sponsored by Holy Cross Province and St. Paul of the Cross Province between 1983 and 1987. This is the first of a series of three.

Fr. Francis Keenan, C.P., in his article "Naked," carries on Fr. Paul's reflection on seeing God in the suffering people of the earth. For thirteen years Fr. Frank has been a chaplain in the emergency room at Lutheran General Hospital and has ministered to many suffering people. During that time he has developed a poetic form for integrating this ministerial experience into the core experience of his contemplative life. In this issue we present the first of three articles which model for us a creative process for reflection on and integration of our "being with" the poor and suffering.

"Community Life" is a continuation of the commentaries on our *Constitutions* given by Fr. Harry Gielen, C.P. at the St. Patrick's Province Congress in June, 1985.

Hispanics are the fastest growing minority in the United States. Yet the Church in the U.S. has not been able to attract a representative number of vocations to serve the Church from this young and dynamic community. Fr. Clemente Barron, C.P. reflects on this fact and tries to hold up some realities that must be faced if the current trends are to change.

Finally, we conclude this issue with a presentation by Fr. Stanislaus Breton, C.P. on the nature of the unique character of Passionist apostolate. This article was first published in *Towards a Theology of the Cross* in 1979.

Michael Higgins, C.P.
Editor

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REV. PAUL WADELL, C.P.

Contemplation of the Passion: The Moral Life as a Matter of Attention

Halfway through his chilling and painfully sad account of life-unto-death in Auschwitz, Elie Wiesel tells a memorable story.¹



One day when we came back from work, we saw three gallows rearing up in the assembly place, three black crows. Roll Call. SS all round us, machine guns trained: the traditional ceremony. Three victims in chains — and one of them, the little servant, the sad-eyed angel.

The SS seemed more preoccupied, more disturbed than usual. To hang a young boy in the front of thousands of spectators was no light matter. The head of the camp read the verdict. All eyes were on the

child. He was lividly pale, almost calm, biting his lips. The gallows threw its shadow over him.

This time the Lagerkapo refused to act as executioner. Three SS replaced him.

The three victims mounted together onto the chairs.

The three necks were palced at the same moment within the nooses.

"Long live liberty!" cried the two adults.

But the child was silent.

"Where is God? Where is He?" someone behind me asked.

At the sign from the head of the camp, the three chairs tipped over.

Total silence throughout the camp. On the horizon the sun was setting.

"Bare your heads!" yelled the head of the camp. His voice was raucous. We were weeping.

"Cover your heads!"

Then the march past began. The two adults were no longer alive. Their tongues hung swollen, blue-tinged. But the third rope was still moving; being so light, the child was still alive. . . .

For more than half an hour he stayed there, struggling between life and death, dying in slow agony under our eyes. And we had to look him full in the face. He was still alive and still red, his eyes were not yet glazed.

Behind me, I heard the same man asking: "Where is God now?"

And I heard a voice within me answer him: "Where is He? Here He is — He is hanging here on this gallows. . . .

That night the soup tasted of corpses.

(*Night*, Elie Wiesel, pp. 61-62)

A numbing, touching, unforgettable story. What does it say to us about moral theology? What does this powerful excerpt from one man's experience of hell in the holocaust, his despair, tortuous decline and emergent transformation have to do with ethics? What does this both tragic and hopeful conviction that it is God who hangs on the gallows in that twitching body of a young boy have to do with the odyssey that we call our moral life? What does the tragedy which evolved forty years ago in Auschwitz have to do with the present business of determining right and wrong, making proper decisions, solving moral dilemmas, negotiating conflicts, or addressing the pressing issues of our day?

And I heard a voice
within me answer him:
"Where is He? Here He is--
He is hanging here on
this gallows...."

For the Christian, and especially for Passionists, it has everything to do with ethics: how Elie Wiesel came to find God in the shadow of those gallows is a parable of what the moral life involves for us. For us Passionists, the moral life is so much more than what we think about abortion, or what we counsel regarding birth control, more than what we say about a person's right to die, and more than our position is on the hotly debated question of nuclear power; in fact, if this is all that we think the moral life involves, then our thought has been far too narrowly construed. Whatever we think about a moral issue is secondary to and contingent upon the much more fundamental and interesting question of who we are and what kind of people we are trying to become. I believe that the moral life for Passionists is a matter of living in such a way that, gradually and most often very haltingly, we are changed into the kind of people who can see that the God of the crucified Jesus is the God of the gallows, the God who is hidden away in the suffering people of the earth, the God who is to be revealed in the poor and downtrodden, the God who is found in those who are in pain. What is more, it is precisely this change in vision, this developing capacity to see what others might not see, that not only most aptly characterizes the moral history of our Founder, St. Paul of the Cross, but also describes the most fitting moral goal for those of us who have been called to share in his story. Simply put, when asked, "Where is God now?" our moral development and history, our character and vision, enable us to answer: "There He is — He is hanging there on this gallows. He is

hiding here in the poor. He is one with those who suffer."

Our new Constitutions to touch upon this. Paragraph 68 states: "St. Paul of the Cross saw the name of Jesus written on the foreheads of the poor." That Paul found Jesus in the poor and suffering was much more than a measure of his piety; indeed, to "see the name of Jesus written on the foreheads of the poor," is not something natural to us, not something we do readily or easily, rather, it is a profound moral achievement, a transformation in vision and character that marks what happens to us when we, like Paul, see the contemplation of the Passion of Jesus as the center of the moral life. For us who share the call of Paul of the Cross, contemplating the Passion is the paradigmatic moral activity: only in and through an ongoing, heartfelt attentiveness to the Passion do the character and virtues appropriate to Passionists come to be.



For Paul of the Cross, contemplation of the Passion of Jesus was much more than a spiritual exercise which nicely expressed his piety; contemplating the Passion was precisely the moral activity, the highly intentional and disciplined way of life that effected the moral transformation appropriate for those who promised to know Jesus in his sufferings. That Paul came to see a direct correlation between contemplation of the Passion and his own moral development, that just this contemplation of the Cross forms the character and en-

courages the virtues which allow Pasisonists to be faithful to their story, leads logically to the realization that, in the moral life, decisions and solutions, problems and issues, are not of first importance as the objects of our attention; rather, the opposite is true. Our ability to choose and decide rightly when the time comes and to act wisely and prudently, depends not so much on reason, but on our character and virtue. What we become is a reflection of whatever has won our heart. Who we are is a measure of whatever it is that has our attention. Paul of the Cross realized, as we do after him, that moral stature and development is simply a reflection of whatever it is that has our attention. Morality is much more a matter of biography than reason; what Paul learned through his own moral history is that, if the Cross was the object of his attention, then inevitably he would not only know Jesus in his sufferings, but also be one with him. In that union he would be transformed by the power of the very thing he loved. If Paul was able to make good moral decisions and offer sound moral advice, if he was compassionate and showed pity on the poor, it was because his of attentiveness to the Cross. Through the moral discipline of contemplation, he learned not only to see what others might not see, but to see and live truthfully. Clearly, this matter of focus is critical to us and we can well afford to interest ourselves in those of the world's writers who have addressed the necessity of attention.

Iris Murdoch and the Importance of Attention

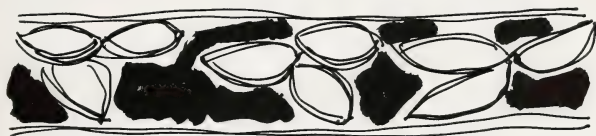
Iris Murdoch is a philosopher who has done work in the field of ethics. She is, however, known to more readers as a novelist and her novels offer clues to how she understands morality. At least once in many of her novels, someone nearly drowns. In *The Sea*, *The Sea*, Charles Arrowby narrowly escapes death when he is trapped in swirling water and tossed between the rocks. In *Nuns and Soldiers*, another character jumps into a calm stream to rescue a dog, and finds himself being sucked into a raging underground river which nearly kills him before delivering him up to safer ground. But for Murdoch, that these people nearly drown is simply the inevitable result of a life embroidered with all the personal fantasies and comforting delusions that they use to keep from being exposed to a reality that would change them. Drowning is a metaphor for what happens in our lives.

*What we become is a
reflection of whatever has
won our heart.*

Through her characters Murdoch sculpts a moral argument: morally all of us are nearly always drowning. Morally all of us are almost always being pulled under because we refuse to expose ourself to the kind of reality capable of changing us, capable of making us more than we already are. Morality is the desire to be more than we are by being attentive to a worthy object that can change us. Yet it is just this we most steadfastly resist. Like Charles Arrowby, our moral action becomes a tragic attempt at self-sabotage: we devote our energies to bolstering the fantasies that console us, those fantasies, which morally speaking, quietly put us to death. Murdoch says "the chief" enemy of excellence in morality is personal fantasy, the tissue of self-aggrandizing and consoling wishes and dreams which prevent one from seeing what there is outside one.² For Murdoch, the quintessential virtue necessary for our proper moral development is humility. "Although humble people are not by definition good people," she writes, "perhaps they are the kind of people who are most likely to become good," because only with humility do we have the capacity to see a world other than our own or to appreciate what is not ourself.³

All of this may seem a digression. What do Iris Murdoch, drowning, fantasies and delusions have to do with Paul of the Cross and contemplation of the Passion? We've already noted that through his moral activity, specifically the contemplation of the passion, Paul changed. By making contemplation a way of life, Paul became something he was not before. Through a life attentive to the Cross, Paul not only came to see differently but as we profess, he learned to see things as they really are: Paul proclaimed that Jesus lives on in those who count for nothing. To learn to see both differently and truthfully is a profound moral achievement. And hardly anyone wants to do it.

Paul's moral experience culminated in the conviction that we are most likely to find Jesus in the ones we are most likely to overlook, and Murdoch suggests that being good is not a matter of choosing rightly, but of learning to see things as they really are without the fantasies and illusions. Becoming good, Murdoch says, "requires the refined and honest perception of what is really the case, a patient and just exploration of what really confronts one, which is not the result of simply opening one's eyes, but of a kind of moral discipline."⁴ Paul of the Cross lived that way. For us, learning to see rightly is a discipline, a slow and painful process. Paul and Murdoch and Passionists as well acknowledge not only that becoming good is hard but, more pointedly, that it is the last thing that any of us really want to do. We resist exposing ourselves to the reality which calls our picture of ourselves into question, and we also resist handing ourselves over to something that has the power to change us.



But isn't that just what Paul did when he handed himself over the power of the Cross? Didn't Paul suffer that same risk when he wholeheartedly submitted himself to the active contemplation of the Passion, realizing as he did so that, more than anything, that contemplation had the power to change him? If who we are is a measure of whatever has our attention, then the life of Paul of the Cross shows us that the whole course of our moral development, all of its possibility and promise, balances on having an object of attention that allows us to see truthfully what it means to live in a world of a God who is love.

We must constantly question our objects of attention. As Murdoch reminds us, our only natural attachment is to ourselves. We chronically resist re-directing our attention to something which might better reveal the true meaning of our world. In a way Murdoch is refreshing: she is so cheerfully pessimistic. Against so much of the consoling optimism that glows over Catholic moral theology today,

Murdoch simply reminds us that "morality has to deal with the fact that so much of human conduct is moved by mechanical energy of an egocentric kind. In the moral life the enemy is the fat relentless ego."⁵ If Murdoch is right, it means we don't naturally love God, we don't naturally love our neighbors, we don't naturally even know what love is. And it means too that we come to love something other than ourself not by an act of will, not by a decision or sheer determination, not simply by changing our mind, but only by changing the object of our attention, by refocusing our energies outward towards an object that allows us to grow by freeing us from delusion. In this way, the primary task of the moral life has not so much to do with freedom or choice, decision or responsibility, but with the inner re-direction, the total re-orientation of our attention away from attachments that aggrandize the self at the cost of destroying it, and toward those objects that allow us to flourish by shaping us into people in keeping with the character of God. For Murdoch, it is beauty, especially the beauty in great works of art, that can make us see the world in the way we had not seen before; however, for Paul of the Cross, who was not the Platonist Murdoch is but a Christian, it is the Cross of Christ, the scandalous artistry of God that lures us into a world the very experience of which teaches us to see differently. To know that this is true we have only to consider Paul's life. To understand why it is true, it may help to consider Aquinas.

St. Thomas Aquinas and a Passion That Is Love

For too long Thomas has been wrongly described as being overly rationalistic or as having an excessively intellectualist view of human nature. A look at Aquinas' treatise on the virtues shows this to be far from the truth. While Thomas consistently acknowledged that men and women have the capacity to reason, he also knew that, more than anything, we are creatures of emotions, of tremendous passions and desires, more than we are creatures of the mind. What makes Aquinas' moral theology so impressive is his recognition that human life is much more a matter of affection than logic, much more a matter of what rules our heart than what fills our head. When Thomas undertakes his analysis of the virtues (those activities that direct us to our end), he turns not to reason, but to the affections because he

realizes that each of the virtues uniquely articulates a love for what we most consider good. The virtues are rational in that they are deliberate, strategic activities toward something we love, but they come to be in us and are formed precisely because there *is* something we love. In Thomas' terms, if we did not love we could have no virtue. As soon as we recognize the love that rules our life, as soon as we know on what we have set our heart, the virtues emerge and are cultivated as appropriate expressions of that love. That is what the virtues are. They are expressions of what we love most.

Thomas says whatever we love must constitute our final end, the perfect and complete good that so fulfills our desire that when we possess it there is nothing left for us to desire. What we love is whatever it is that is going to bring us happiness. Pinpointing this good, knowing precisely what it is that will make us happy, is for Thomas the most crucial moral discernment because he knows that whatever it is we think will bring us happiness will rule our lives, channel our energies and harness all our attention. Perhaps Thomas' most ingenious moral insight was realizing that ultimately whatever we do we do for the sake of something we love because in possessing that we find our happiness. As Thomas says, "An object on which our desire finally rests dominates all our affections." And again: "To aim at an end is to direct all our activity toward it." And finally: "Different ideas of how life should be lived come from the various objects that we consider good." That is why it is so extremely important not only to know what we love, but to love well, to focus our affections on an object that not only best allows our life to be good, but also which can simply make us happy. Thomas is not just being rhetorical when he asks in the *Summa* if our last end consists in wealth, sensual pleasure, honor or prestige. He knew whatever we choose to love will not only make for very different kinds of life, but also for very different kinds of people. Put simply, those who choose to love money are very different from those who choose to love God. For someone like Thomas, who is a saint, where our affections finally rest makes all the difference. The virtues befitting one who wants to be a friend of this world are very different from the virtues befitting one who wants to be a friend of God, and what Thomas so persistently implores us to see is that only the friends of God find peace.

*Where our affections finally
rest makes all the difference.*

This may all be true, but what has it to do with Paul of the Cross as he struggled so long to found his community, as he trekked across the mountains of northern Italy, or as he traveled from village to village preaching of a God he loved? I suspect that there is a connection, for Paul's tireless ability to do all these things came not from stubborn determination of sheer power of will, but from the very thing he loved. What Aquinas so carefully details in a theology, Paul displays in biography. The life of Paul of the Cross was a life ruled by something he loved, and what Paul came to see through his history is that what we finally love, where we set our heart, makes all the difference because each human life, the shape of every biography, is simply a measure of the things we love. Paul of the Cross loved God in a very special way. He loved God in the Pasison of God's Son. Paul loved the God who suffered and died for him. Paul loved the God who was so strangely and wonderously revealed on the Cross. Paul loved the God he came to see on the gallows, and for us Passionists that love was the beginning of our vocations. Each of us who are Passionists is called to love not so much as Paul loved, but *what* Paul loved because our capacity to continue his story, ever to know what it means to be a Passionist, simply depends on our willingness to fix our attention, to set our hearts, on the very thing Paul loved.

Loving what Paul loved is not nearly so much an expression of piety as it is a crucial moral activity. If we are going to be Passionists, if we are going to be men of that kind of character, then there is absolutely nothing arbitrary or haphazard about finally having the Cross as the object of our love. Our most important moral discovery as Passionists is to realize that it is absolutely necessary for us to love God in the sufferings of his Son above all. This kind of love will give us the internal qualities, the virtues and character, that best correspond to who we say we are. We become Passionists not by decision, not by years and years of formation, but, like our Founder, through a life fixed on a very special kind of love. In short, like Paul of the

Cross, we become Passionists not because we want to, but because we learn to contemplate the Passion. That contemplation is simply another name for the special activity of our love.

If we look at the life of Paul of the Cross and see the kind of person he became because of the object of his love, we begin to see why the partnership of Iris Murdoch and Thomas Aquinas might not be so strange after all. When Murdoch suggests that each of us is a measure of whatever it is that has our attention, she means that it is precisely the thing we love that literally determines who we are. Similarly, when Thomas argues that our affections must finally rest on God, he does so not just because Thomas was a Christian, but because he knew that we take on the form of the thing we love. Remember that Thomas calls love a passion, and that means the object of our love not only attracts us, but also that we suffer the form of the very thing we love. The thing we love exercises a power over us so that the more we love, the more attentive we are to what we love, the more we undergo the change of being shaped and formed by it. To say that love is a passion is to see that who we become is the work of what we love. To say that love is a passion is to see that we are formed by and into whatever we love. To say that love is a passion means that by suffering the attractive power of the thing we love — being conformed to it — we are changed, and we are changed by gradually taking on the features of what we love. In this sense, charity simply describes the character of a life that has suffered to love of God. Those who love God above all things cannot help becoming like God.

It is this that makes the life of Paul of the Cross so arrestingly beautiful. What cannot be overly stressed is that Paul had particular virtues and a definite character not coincidentally, but because of what he loved. For us who are Passionists it must be the same.

What happens to us when the object of our love is the crucified

Jesus? What happens to us is that certain kinds of virtues come to be in us, that a certain shape and stamp is given to our life. We discover in ourselves virtues of patience and kindness. We see ourselves becoming people of courage and hope. More than anything, our love has the name of compassion because that is how love is formed in us when we are one with the God who suffers and dies. Friendship with God in his Passion makes us a people of compassion not because we are soft-hearted or sad, but because that is how life looks to us from the Cross. Our very union with a suffering God gives us the character of that God.

And so it is that Passionists see differently. So it is that Passionists see things others might miss. We see differently because of the distinctive shape of our love. Attaining that love is a gift, but only insofar as it is also the result of a certain kind of life. Compassion, at least the kind of compassion formed in the sufferings of God's Son, is the harvest of contemplation. It is because our moral life is the activity of contemplating the Passion that we carry on the story of St. Paul of the Cross by bringing God's compassion into our world. We are Passionists because of what we love. When our love is a contemplation of the Passion we achieve the intimacy with God that lets us know what the moral life is for us: a life of contemplating the thing we love so we can be that love. And so when someone in great suffering asks us, "Where is God now?" we can say: "Here he is! He is hanging here on this gallows, He is hidden in your sufferings, He is sharing in your pain," not because we are clever, but simply because that is who we are.



NOTES

- ¹ The idea for beginning this essay with this passage from Elie Wiesel's *Night* was taken from Enda McDonagh's "The Dignity of the Undignified," in his *The Making of Disciples*, Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1982, p. 128.
- ² Iris Murdoch, "On 'God' and 'Good'" *The Sovereignty of Good*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970, p. 50.
- ³ Iris Murdoch, "The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts" *Ibid*, p. 104.
- ⁴ Iris Murdoch, "The Idea of Perfection" *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- ⁵ Iris Murdoch, "On God and 'Good'" *Ibid*, p. 52



Naked

"Our vocation as Passionists prompts us to familiarize ourselves thoroughly with the Passion of Christ, both in history and in the lives of people today."
(*Constitutions*, #65)

"One-one thousand! Two-one thousand! Three-one thousand!"
I walked in on them unexpectedly.

Two young paramedics-in-training were performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation on a life-size manikin.

As the first continued to shout out his chest compressions, "Four-one thousand! Five-one thousand!" his companion looked up and saw me.

"Quick!" he deadpanned, "Cover her up! The padre just walked in!"
The first paramedic lifted his head.

They both began to laugh.

Their blonde, no-nonsense instructor saw what had happened.

"Come on, you two! Back to work! Get your rhythm right!"

She winked a smile in my direction.

"Frank's seen more naked women than you two ever will!"

"We wish to share in the distress of all, especially those who are poor and neglected."
(*Constitutions*, #3)



The instructor was right.

After many years as chaplain in a busy emergency department, I have seen many men and women physically naked.

And I have noticed something more.

Paramedic ambulances bring in men and women, old and young, just as they are: in work clothes, business suits, pajamas, formal wear. . .

When shirts and blouses, trousers and dresses, are cut away, an inner reality is exposed.

A psychological nakedness lies bare: the world of present fears and anguish, of future hopes and dreams. The gaze of Christian faith reveals something else: The physical and emotional sufferings of Christ.

Pope John Paul II puts it most succinctly: "We find Christ most profoundly in those who suffer." (Apostolic letter, *Salvifici Doloris*)

In hospitals, where over seventy-five percent of persons in our country die, Christ's passion is cloned in the distress of the suffering and dying: mental, emotional, and financial agonies; the sweat of real blood; the stripping away of clothing, belongings, job, and family; cancerous bedsores to rival any scourging; carrying the cross of diseased heart, brain, lung, liver, pancreas; being grafted to an IV pole with needle nails; the rasping of lingering death.

And what an incentive for the hope of resurrection to witness acceptance of pain and suffering and dying with full awareness and even joy!

"The Passion of Christ continues in this world until He comes in glory: therefore, we share in the joys and sorrows of our contemporaries. . ."

(*Constitutions*, #3)

I keep a daily diary of my experiences in hospital ministry: my perceptions, my reactions, my reflections.

Blank verse has become my developing process of candid human landscapes: subjective, verbal polaroids.

Centuries old Sacred Scriptures are reincarnated in men, women and children suffering and struggling in a twentieth century community hospital.

The following sketches portray patients, families and staff en-

countered in a moment of unanticipated stress, in a scene of unrehearsed drama, in an instant of psychological nakedness: memories of the Paschal Mystery.

SEPTEMBER TWILIGHT

PSALM 10

Why are you so far away, O Lord?
Why do you hide yourself when we are in trouble?
The wicked are proud and persecute the poor;
 catch them in the traps they have made.

The wicked man is proud of his evil desires;
 the greedy man curses and rejects the Lord.
A wicked man does not care about the Lord;
 In his pride he thinks that God does not matter.



It's Laura's fifteenth birthday
She hastens toward McDonald's
A rendezvous with friends

She takes a shortcut path
Right through a forest preserve
In late September twilight

The rapist came from nowhere
He muzzled her mouth with his hand
And pressed a knife to her throat

When Laura started screaming
he hit her hard with his fist
And almost knocked her out

He said he'd kill unless . . .
Then forced and pinned her down
The memory: fear . . . and pain

Sharp stones that bruised her back
Some clouds of swarming gnats
His weight . . . the dust . . . her shame

He hides himself in the villages,
waiting to murder innocent people.
He spies on his helpless victims;
he waits in his hiding place like a lion.
He lies in wait for the poor;
he catches them in his trap and drags them away.

Mother

Unleashed maternal rage
"She never had sex before!
"My little baby! So young!

"It wasn't even dark at seven!
"So, why didn't someone help?
Oh, chaplain! What an animal!"

Father

So stoic, speechless, divorced
The father slumped in his chair
Spread-eagled feet outstretched

A brooding stare in his gaze
Of anger? Rage? Despair?
He kept avoiding my eyes

The helpless victims lie crushed;
brute strength has defeated them.
The wicked man says to himself:
"God doesn't care!
He has closed his eyes and will never see me!"

O Lord, punish those wicked men!
Remember those who are suffering!

Boy Friend

Glenn sat alone, sixteen
In almost trance-like state
Reflecting unshared thoughts

His look was vacant, hollow
"How long do we have to wait?"
Phsst . . . popped a Pepsi tab

Policeman

He talked at length explaining
How gently he'd question Laura
"That this won't happen again"

But later he shared with me
"They'll say that she provoked him!
"The punk will get off free!"

How can a wicked man despise God
and say to himself,
"He will not punish me?"

But you do see;
you take notice of trouble and suffering
and are always ready to help.

Break the power of wicked and evil men;
punish them for the wrong they have done
until they do it no more.

Chaplain

I ached with Laura's pain
(My youngest niece's name)
With hatred towards her attacker

I gently took her hand
She didn't pull it back
"Oh, Father! Thanks for staying!"

Laura

Her lips were purple, swollen
Both legs seen torn with scratches
Exposed beneath her gown

"And what a birthday present!"
She glanced away in tears
"The only one I got. . ."

You will listen, O Lord,
to the prayers of the lowly;
you will give them courage.

You will hear the cries
of the oppressed and the orphans.
You will judge in their favor,
so that men may cause terror no more.

RACHEL

John 8

Jesus went out to the Mount of Olives. At daybreak he reappeared in the temple area; and when the people started coming to him, he sat down and began to teach them. The Scribes and Pharisees led a woman forward who had been caught in adultery. They made her stand there in front of everyone.

Eleven thirty at night
"Here, Frank! I need your help!"
A weary, E.R. doctor

"The woman on Cardiac Three
"She asked to see a priest
"her rhythm is unstable

"No monitored beds are free
"She'll stay down here all night
"Just see if you can calm her"

The Cardiac Room is dark
A night light barely glows
My eyes take some adjusting

"Oh, Father! I'm glad you came!"
A husky, feminine whisper
I reach the side of her bed

"My name is Rachel, Father
"I asked the doctor to call you"
A faceless sphere on the pillow

"I'm going to be admitted
"I want to go to confession"
I take her hand in mine

"Teacher," the Scribes and Pharisees said to Jesus, "this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. In the law, Moses ordered such women to be stoned. What do you have to say about the case?" (They were posing this question to trap him, so that they could have something to accuse him of.)

"So many years ago. . ."
Her voice begins to break
"I killed a child I had"

I swallow hard. "Abortion"
So soft I bend to hear
"Just eighteen then" A pause

"I'm sixty-eight today
"That's fifty years ago
"The man was my boss at work

"No real love or warmth
"So lonely, weak, naive
"And sex was all he felt

"He promised we would marry
"Thank God we never did!
I hadn't met my Ben

"Now forty happy years
"I didn't ever tell him"
Again a hesitation

"We've never had a child
"Was that to punish me?
"From God? Will He forgive me?"

Jesus simply bent down and started tracing on the ground with his finger. When they persisted in their questioning, he straightened up

and said to them, "Let the man who has no sin be the first to cast a stone at her." A second time Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground.

I inhale slowly, deeply
Those fifty years of guilt!
I ask the Lord for words

"No, Rachel, I don't know
"The many reasons why
"God does the things He does

"But this I know for certain
"Our God's a loving Father
"For any wrong we've done

"And there is nothing: no crime
"No sin, and no abortion
"That God will not forgive

"He knows your pain and grief
"Our God forgives you, Rachel
"You've more than paid your debt

"And God forgives forever
"It's buried in His love
"He'll never dig it up

"To throw it in your face
"To punish you or Ben
"No! Never! Never! Ever!"

Then the audience drifted away one by one, beginning with the elders. This left Jesus alone with the woman, who continued to stand before him. Jesus finally straightened up again and said to her, "Woman, where did they all disappear to?"

Then Rachel starts to weep
She squeezes tight my hand
and brings it to her lips

I say the ritual form
"Absolve you from your sins. . ."
Now Rachel blesses herself

"Oh, thank you, Father!" Stooping
I kiss her forehead. . . whisper
"A happy birthday, Rachel!"

I quietly tiptoe out
And thank the Lord for miracles
Those secret ones, unseen

Beneath the skin and bones
In mind and heart and soul
Of Spirit health and peace

"Has no one condemned you?" Jesus asked. "No one sir," the woman answered. Jesus said, "Nor do I condemn you. You may go. But from now on, avoid this sin."



CREATIVE WORD!

In the beginning,
God created the heavens and the earth . . .
Then God spoke:
"Let there be light,"
and light appeared.

(Genesis 1:1,3)

From the very beginning
the Word was with God.
Through the Word God made all things;
not one thing in all creation
was made without the Word.
The Word was the source of life.

(John 1:2-4)

We're strangers all
Yet clustering close
Our voices mute

An elevator
Descending flight
From cafeteria

OB-GYNE floor
The doors slide open
One weary male

When peaceful stillness lay over all,
and night had run the half of her swift course
down from the heavens,
from your royal throne,
leapt your all-powerful Word.

(Wisdom 18:14-15)

Both hands are full
Brown shopping bag
Bouquet of roses

He hesitates
An awkward pause
Then squeezes in

He's stocky short
With swarthy skin
Receding scalp

My word is like the snow and the rain
that come down from the sky
to water the earth.

They make the crops grow
to provide seed for planting
and bread for eating.

So also will be the Word that I speak
It will not return to me empty;

My Word will do everything I send it to do. (Isaiah 55:10-11)

Candescant eyes
I risk a chance
"A boy or girl?"

He turns his head
A radiant smile
Through roses . . . "Girls!"

Surprises! "Twins?"
His eyebrows rise
With pride: "No! Triplets!"

Mary Magdalen thought Jesus was the gardener,
so she said to him,

"If you took him away, sir,
tell me where you have put him,
and I will go and get him."

Jesus said to her, "Mary!"

She turned toward him
and said in Hebrew, "Rabboni!"

(John 20:11)

Creative Word!
A bubble pricked
Explosive force

"Would you believe!"
"I've never heard!"
"Congratulations!"

The Lobby Exit
All sharing joy
Now, friends with friends!

Then I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne,
"You see this city?
Here God lives among men and women!
They shall be his people,
and he will be their God.
His name is God-with-them.
He will wipe away all tears from their eyes;
there will be no more death,
no more grief or sadness or pain.
The world of the past has gone."
The one who sits on the throne said,
"And now I make all things new!"

(Revelation 21:3-5)

Community Life

Introductory Remarks

Tradition is a fire to which each generation brings its own wood. This may apply in a special way to the dimension of "community" within the history of our Congregation.

In our days, community is a key word in the shaping of religious life, the wood that our generation brings to the fire of tradition. It is, indeed, striking that when examining the indexes to the historical surveys of our rules, the General Chapter Decrees or the custom books, we do not find a single reference to the term "community" in those sources. This does not mean that the reality of community was altogether absent, but it was not reflected upon for itself.

This very fact denotes a certain vision of religion which at that time was conceived more in terms of individual sanctification than of a communal life project. The prevailing theology of the church had a strong influence in this respect. When we think of the then current sacramental practice and theology, for example with regard to the Eucharist, we discover the same stress on the individual and an almost complete lack of the community dimension. All that the Rule since 1775 had to say about the celebration of the Eucharist is the following: "Then they will have one hour of meditation during which they are allowed to celebrate and to hear masses." And whatever is said in the Chapter decrees as far as the Eucharist is concerned has to do with the time of celebration and the different categories of Mass intentions.

*Tradition is a fire to which
each generation brings
its own wood.*

Modern Concern for Community

It was not until the 1968-70 General Chapter that the community theme was given due attention and was integrated into the texture of Passionist life. The renewed Church theology, the contributions from the human sciences to the process of a truly human growth through relationships with others, and the idea of democratization on all levels of society and church life were among the factors influencing an evolution which made our Congregation, as indeed all religious institutes, move from a static uniformity to a dynamic pluriformity.

Community thus came to be regarded less as a given reality, than as a project to be realized by the involvement of all its members in whatever situation or status they might be living. The refrain that recurs ever so often in the documents of our Congregation "Affinche fiorisca l'uniformita . . ." (so that uniformity may flourish), came to be replaced by the challenge: "Affinche fiorisca la comunita" (so that community may flourish).

Community in the Past

Innumerable texts could be quoted to illustrate this passage from uniformity to pluriformity, from a static to a dynamic approach. I just want to juxtapose two texts that show the difference of approach. In a long address to the 1878 Chapter, the Superior General Bernard Silvestrelli stated: "The Rule given to us by St. Paul of the Cross is made for all of his sons whether they live in Italy or elsewhere, whether they are in England or any other country. And therefore, no Passionist, of whatever county, enjoys the ridiculous privilege of treading it under foot in order to live in his own way and according to the worldly ideas of the country he is in." In our new Constitutions we read: "The fundamental character of our Passionist vocation,

however, must always be observed." (32).-

This last text clearly marks the distance that separates us from a concept of community that is ready-made and demands only absolute conformity to what is pre-established. There seems to be a complete reversal of approach: what is asked for now is creativity and not conformity to a given pattern. The community to be shaped is presented as lying ahead of us: "...we ought to examine our community living and our own daily lives, taking as our standard the Gospel, our Constitutions, and the signs of the times" (27).

The traditional form of community life, with its rigid uniformity in matters of even the smallest detail, may have had its own difficulties and hardships, as indeed its inconsistencies. As late as 1952, for example, the Province of St. Paul of the Cross, USA, made a formal proposal to the General Chapter to request that it be allowed permission to replace the by then expensive spoons and forks with cheaper metal ones. But it seems to me that what is being asked of us now is in some ways much more demanding. Not being able or obliged to rely upon precise and detailed prescriptions applying to all communities anywhere in the world, we are challenged to keep intact "the fundamental character of Passionist life" in a type of community that we ourselves are invited to shape within the varying social and cultural situations in which we live.



Our Constitution and Community

The composition of the chapter on Community Life is very clear, as appears from the following outline:

- Par. 25-26: The christian foundations of religious community;
- 27-28: The need for dialogue and mutual respect.
- 29-31: Three categories of brethren in need of our special concern: the sick, the aging, the deceased.
- 32-36: The local communities should be united with
 - the whole Congregation
 - the wider communities of the Church
 - the local Church
 - the people among whom they live
 - the parents, relatives, friends, and benefactors.

The contents of this chapter is as clear as its composition. But what appears to be, in theory, self-evidently simple and what is in no need of elaborate reflections, may prove to be, in reality, a very difficult and demanding task to be achieved. Everything that has been said in the previous chapter on the foundations of our life is to be presupposed here. It is because we have experienced a value to which we want to remain faithful, that it will be possible for people of difference age groups and background to live together in harmony day by day. We have not chosen each other, but rather have we been given each other. It remains true, however, that we have not opted for *the* religious life in the abstract, but for the concrete community whose members and whose cause we have come to appreciate.

A Community of Faith

The opening paragraphs of this chapter (25-26) are meant to describe our community primarily as a *community of faith*. Our life lacks its proper meaning and its sense of direction if the reference to God's call and Christ's love were to be neglected. What D. Bonhoeffer says about Christian community in general is of special relevance for religious community: "It is easily forgotten that the fellowship of brethren is a gift of grace, a gift of the Kingdom of God. Let him who has had the privilege of living a common Christian life with other Christians praise God's grace from the bottom of his heart. Let

him thank God on his knees and declare: It is grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brethren."

"The christian community is founded on the love of Christ, who by His cross, tore down the wall of separation and made all people one" (26). Christian brotherhood is not an ideal that we have invented; it is rather a reality that we have inherited, having its origin in the love of God as manifested in Christ. "Community is not our idea, nor is it our achievement. At its heart our community is the presence of Christ, and we live community because we have been summoned to it by the Lord" (T. McDonough). The more clearly we learn to recognize that the ground and strength of our fellowship is in Jesus Christ alone, the more serenely shall we think of our fellowship and pray and hope for it.



Community as God's Gift

Since our community is essentially a community of faith, we cannot stress enough our dependence on God's initiative whose call has reached us through various human meditations. But for God's action through Jesus Christ, we would not have been able to dream of such an amazing reality as God's Kingdom as proclaimed by Jesus; nor, consequently, would we have been able to set up communities that want to witness to the values of that Kingdom. D. Bonhoeffer's phrase: "It is grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brethren" is not just a pious reflection, but the acknowledgement of a basic truth. In our community we say

to each other: "We are together, but we cannot fulfill each other. We help each other, but we have also to remind each other that our destiny is beyond togetherness. We are not primarily for each other, but for God." Our eyes should not remain fixed on each other but be directed forward to what is dawning on the horizon of our existence. Too often we think of our community on too low a level. The religious community is not a closed circle of people embracing each other, but a forward-moving group of companions bound together by the same voice asking their attention.

When we describe the ideal religious community as a "happy family," as a "group of very sensitive people" or as an "action or pressure group," we only speak about a secondary trait. "Although it might be helpful to incorporate into the life of the Christian community behavior patterns and techniques which are derived from other forms of group life, we will have to relativize these attempts by making them subservient to the self-understanding of the Christian community as a people fashioned by God. Many interpersonal processes, leadership patterns and strategies that have been identified by psychological and sociological studies of groups can indeed offer new insight in the understanding of the life of the Christian community. But the unique nature of the Christian community requires a constant awareness of the limited applicability of these findings" (H. Nouwen, *Reaching Out*. London, 1976, p. 142-43)

Thankfulness for Community

Because God has already laid the only foundation of our fellowship, because God has bound us together in one body with others in Jesus Christ, long before we entered into common life with them, we enter into that common life not as demanders but as thankful recipients. We thank God for giving us brethren who live by his call and by his promise. We do not complain about what God does not give us, we rather thank God for what he does give us daily. What D. Bonhoeffer wrote about a pastor complaining about his congregation, applies in a special way to members of a religious community: "A pastor should not complain about his congregation, certainly never to other people, but also not to God. A congregation has not been entrusted to him in order that he should become its accuser before God and men. When a person becomes alienated from

a Christian community in which he has been placed and begins to raise complaints about it, he had better examine himself first to see whether the trouble is not due to his wish dream that should be shattered by God; and if this be the case, let him thank God for leading him into this predicament. But if not, let him nevertheless guard against ever becoming an accuser of the congregation before God. Let him rather accuse himself for his unbelief. Let him pray to God for an understanding of his own failure and his particular sin, and pray that he may not wrong his brethren. Let him, in the consciousness of his own guilt, make intercession for his brethren. Let him do what he is committed to do, and thank God" (*Life Together*. London, 1954, p. 17).

In this respect, I cannot help thinking of Blessed Brother Isidore who was so deeply appreciative of his religious community. He did experience its deficiencies and suffered from them, e.g. when a group of candidate brothers was more a nuisance to him than a help in the work at the kitchen. But he did not fall into complaints; he was able to bear those deficiencies, because religious life to him meant so much more than the hurting incidents of daily life.



The Need for Dialogue

The par. 27-28 evoke two important elements that should foster community life: dialogue and mutual esteem. Not only informal, but also *formal dialogue* is needed "to see more clearly what God wants of us. . . taking as our standards the Gospel, our Constitutions and the signs of the time."

Each one of us is aware of how difficult it is to discuss our community life in the light of these standards. Such a dialogue will rarely be perfect and often enough we are left with an impression of

failure. Does it follow from there that we should give up our efforts of dialogue altogether? In the same way as we will never be able to realize the Gospel fully, we'll never be able to build a perfect community. But in the same way as we cannot give up striving to fulfil the Gospel, we cannot give up striving to build a community. Failures are no denial of a value, of an ideal, but a challenge to start anew. It is inherent to an ideal that it will never be fully realized. But even so, it keeps a challenging dynamism to keep us alert and alive.

Some Important Questions

A series of questions could be formulated to trace important underlying elements in any community dialogue:

- 1) Are we disposed to really share each other's faith? Are we ready to speak on God's place in our own life?
- 2) Is our dialogue more than superficial chat that avoids the deeper levels of our existential commitment?
- 3) Do we trust each other enough so as to take the risk of communicating to others our real concerns and aspirations?
- 4) Is there a good balance in our lives as individual persons and as community members?
- 5) Do we really bear being members of an imperfect community?
- 6) Do we have clear expectations with regard to our community in the light of the Gospel, our Constitutions and the signs of the time?
- 7) To what extent do we try to confirm each other?
- 8) Is our community an open community? Which are our channels of communication with the world and the Church at large, with our Congregation and Province, with the local Church and society?
- 9) Can we speak of a common approach and inspiration in our different forms of apostolate?
- 10) Do we value the presence among us of sick and aging brethren? What vital room do we create for our young candidates and religious?

Mutual Esteem -

Mutual Esteem is closely connected with the practice of dialogue. It urges us "to acknowledge with respect the dignity and equality of every other member, whom we accept as a unique individual" and "to help each of our brethren to develop his individual personality and talents" (26).

Community should not destroy the person, nor should the person destroy the community. Both exist by each other's grace, so both should be recognized and favoured. Their respective importance would be undervalued if either were stressed unilaterally. The person needs the community as much as the community needs the person. Our Western culture tends to overemphasize the originality and autonomy of the individual person. But how little is there ultimately that we as persons have not received from others, how little that we created in full autonomy? Can unlimited personal freedom ever be a truly human ideal?

On the other hand, a too rigid concept of community could destroy a person's identity. A religious community should be aware of the fact that, for its own vitality, it cannot possibly miss the talents, the freedom and creativity of the individual members. As Teilhard de Chardin puts it: True community should "liberate," "super-personalize" the identity of the individual person.

Although there will always remain a certain tension between person and community, both are called to form a dynamic union. Neither the community nor the individual person should be considered as goal by themselves. It is even dangerous to speak of goal and means in this respect. If we affirm that the person is a means at the service of the community, we then degrade human personality. A person can never be a means, because he is an irreplaceable value in himself. But we cannot affirm, either, that the community is a means at the service of the individual person. In that case we degrade community, because community is never a "thing," but the whole of several persons. To consider the community as a means would imply that the other persons are used as a means for one's own personality. It needs no proof that such would be unethical. What has to be looked for is a balance between the mutual influence of the person on the community and of the community on the per-

"It is easily forgotten that the fellowship of brethren is a gift of grace, a gift of the Kingdom of God..."

son. Ideally speaking we could say: every person is the community in an ever new, original and irreplaceable way.

The Sick

Par. 29-31 refer to three categories of brethren who deserve our special attentiveness and concern: the sick, the aging and the deceased.

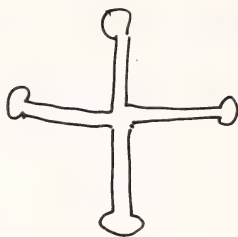
We know of the great love of St. Paul of the Cross for *the sick*. He wanted them to be given every care possible. The phrase: "They share in the Passion of Christ at a deeper and more personal level" may need some interpretation. I must confess that I feel uneasy with this unqualified statement. Since we have been accustomed to read the Passion narrative in conjunction with Jesus' life story, we have come to see Jesus' Passion as the result or the final stage of his protracted commitment to alleviate the sufferings of others. Is not the crucifixion a different type of suffering from sickness? Sickness is an expression of our finiteness as created beings and could not be equated to an execution. Sickness, as such, is a life situation that is inherent to our mortal condition. Its special relevance in christian perspective does not come from its being a state of suffering as such, but from the *possibility* it offers to remain faithful to God in a situation of hurting experience. As John Dalrymple says: "The Catholic instinct is surely right to extend the idea of redemptive suffering beyond the particular to the general. What makes suffering Christian and redemptive is not only its context (suffering in the cause of Christ) but also its agent (Christ joined to us). From the point for view of content perhaps only sufferings in the direct cause of

the Kingdom qualify as crosses. From the point of view of who suffers, however, all hardship can be made Christian and therefore redemptive, by an act of joining ourselves, branch to vine, to the redeeming Christ. In that way we can convert, if we try, all hardships into the redemptive cross of Christ by an act of prayerful offering. To do that is to unite our sufferings with Christ at the primary level of his obedience to the Father. That was the level, after all, at which he redeemed mankind" (*The Cross, a Pasture*. London, 1983, p. 63).

The Aged

Care for *the aging* is an act of love and gratitude towards brethren who have spent their whole life at the service of our community. We are all tempted to oblivion by reducing life to its actual moment. This temptation is strengthened by today's society in which the tendency prevails to value as important only the "hot news." A religious community should have a broader perspective on what is of a value for its own life. By forgetting the past and the contribution of aging brethren we would bypass the origin of our actual resources. Have they not, in earlier days, laboured to build and to sustain the community, materially and spiritually, so as to create structures and possibilities for the present generation in view of ever new commitments?

In showing due concern for the aging brethren, religious communities should keep alive an eminently human value which is threatened in modern society. The norms of production and of usefulness tend to dominate its appreciation of human existence. Christian love is based on more authentic grounds, inspired as it is by God's boundless love for every human person in whatever stage of life he or she may live. *The community we actually have should be dearer to us than the community we dream of.* If our community includes many aging brethren, we should view this as our "kairos," as our God-given opportunity to keep to Gospel values not only in our dreams, but in authentic deeds of loving concern towards these same brethren.



The Deceased

These reflections apply also, somehow, to our *deceased brethren*. In a faith perspective they continue to belong to our community. They have reached the goal of the journey that is still standing out for us. To believe in eternal life is nothing else than to believe in a God of unending love and life, who is faithful to all human beings as he was faithful to Jesus Christ whom he raised from the dead. As is evoked in Edwin Muir's poem "the Transfiguration":

Then he will come, Christ the uncrucified,
Christ the discrucified, his death undone,
His agony unmade, his cross dismantled —
Glad to be so — and the tormented wood
Will cure its hurt and grow into a tree
In a green springing corner of young Eden . . ."

Our confession "Jesus is the Lord" includes the belief that his life and his death are fulfilled in the abyss of God's love and that "in the green springing corner of young Eden" he has prepared places for us to enjoy new life.

To remember our deceased brethren is an act of gratitude and at the same time an act of faith and of hope. In them we may see the fulfillment of all that our community strives for here on earth. Roger Schutz, the Prior of Taizé, was once asked how his community was going. His amazing answer was: "We don't have a community yet, because up till now no one of the brethren has died . . ."

Our Wider Community

In *par.* 32-38 our local communities are called upon to reach out to the wider communities of the Congregation, the Church and the world. Recent developments in socialization and communication have made us aware, more than ever, of our mutual interdependence on a larger scale.

With regard to our own Congregation, we can certainly say that ever since the 1968-70 General Chapters international contacts and collaboration have been intensified among us. But the question remains whether and how far these contracts really reach and influence the local communities. For example, at the last General Synod in Tanzania, September 1984, the question of our missionary involvement was discussed in an atmosphere of great openness. Far reaching options and commitments were agreed upon to which we may return when speaking on the apostolate. I wonder whether these options and commitments really reached our local communities.

In matters of communication, religious communities are faced with the same difficulties that are encountered by all organizations of some size: how can general statements and policies be made concrete and operative? In our case, this question may concern more directly the Provincial government, but that same government cannot but rely upon the interest, the openness and the solidarity of the local communities.

The same applies, in an analogous way, to what is said in *par.* 33 "All our local communities are essentially related to the wider communities of the Church. . . They share in varying degrees in the life, aims and problems of these other groups." The expression "in varying degrees" indicates that there is room here for creativity and inventiveness. Much will depend on the composition and the apostolic commitments of the different communities.

The Reversed Mission

This relationship to the wider communities of the Church should be oriented not only by the readiness to give, but also by the readiness to receive. This is true also for our involvement on the level of the local Church. The idea of "*reversed mission*," the awareness, that is, *that we reach out to others not only in order to give, but also*

in order to receive, can vitalize our community life in unforeseeable ways. It is certainly the experience of most of us, and particularly of those who are engaged in specialized forms of apostolate, that sharing the life situations of other groups has really enriched our own lives. In a paper on community life Fr. T. McDonough made this pertinent remark some years ago: *"We need the wounded hands and the bleeding feet of this world. We need its broken heart. For they are the hands, the feet and the heart of the Crucified Lord. Our uniquely Passionist community life is not what we offer but what we are given. It is not what we have but what we receive, over and over again. Our Chapter Document would be much improved if it lost some of the proud certainty and the confident self-possession with which it so easily outlines our life and our identity. It would be much improved if that certainty and self-possession were replaced by a little humility and a little gratitude that this is a world that will give us our identity by being for us and in us the presence of the Crucified."*



Hispanics, Racism and Vocations

For the past ten to fifteen years, the Catholic Church has been focusing on the phenomenon of the Hispanic presence in the United States and especially on Hispanic vocations. Along with the growing awareness of the need to provide adequate pastoral care for Hispanics, the Church is also beginning to realize that its future in the United States will depend, to a great extent, upon its Hispanic peoples.

Hispanics are the fastest growing minority in the United States. Not only are they immigrating in record numbers, legally and illegally, but they are also a very young population, the average age falling somewhere between twenty and twenty-one years. Hispanics also have one of the highest birth rates in the nation and a larger-than-average family size.

All this has led many to project that by the year 2000, the Catholic population will be about 50 percent Hispanic, if all things remain equal.

The Loss of Hispanic Catholics

However, not all things are remaining equal. There is some indication that Hispanics are not automatically becoming practicing Catholics or even remaining Catholics. The Church has reason for concern. If events continue on their present course, then the chances are that the Church will not be 50 percent Hispanic by the turn of the century. By that time, many Hispanics will not identify themselves as Catholic. There are several reasons for this.

First of all, the socialization process that any ethnic group undergoes brings about a loss of characteristics and customs which distinguish it from the dominant society. Thus, second and third generations find themselves more and more removed from the language, customs and religious practices of their parents and grandparents.

Today, there are many second and third generation Hispanics who have been "lost" to the Church, and they have no desire to "come back home" to it simply because they had never found a "home" in it. These people were lost because of benign neglect.

Another reason why the Church may not have as many Hispanics as it should claim to have by the end of the century is that there are many non-Catholic Churches who are actively proselytizing Hispanics, especially those that are socially needy.

These non-Catholic Churches are investing personnel, materials and other resources with the hope of attracting Hispanics to their denomination. They are also setting up Seminaries for Hispanic candidates as well as small neighborhood Churches with Spanish-speaking, Hispanic ministers.

The Catholic Resource

The Catholic response to these proselytizing efforts has been mixed. The Church has issued official documents at all levels, such as the United States Bishops' Pastoral Letter, *The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment*. Many individual Bishops have also written diocesan pastoral letters making Hispanics a priority for their pastoral care and concern.

Besides writing pastoral letters, the Church has also initiated processes and programs, like the *III Encuentro Nacional Hispano de Pastoral* at the national, regional and local level. These programs were aimed at getting grassroot Hispanics involved in the life and mission of the Church. They were encouraged to gather together in small communities and in small groups in order to reflect upon their lived experiences as Hispanics in light of the Scriptures, Gospel values and Church teachings. They were asked to make recommendations to the Bishops as to how the Church could better serve them so that the Bishops could better respond to their needs. They were also urged

to seek non-practicing and/or fallen away Hispanic Catholics and invite back to the Church. Programs like this have created a great deal of excitement and enthusiasm within the Catholic Hispanic community. Yet, progress is not easily measured.

In fact, some think that the church is going backwards instead of forward. There are now some beautiful documents as well as some good models for evangelization which address the needs of the Hispanic population, but the very structures which can disseminate those documents and oversee those programs are being cut back. For example, before the *III Encuentro* (1984 to 1985), there were eight Hispanic Regional Offices with full time and part time staffs. Today there are only five. Three Regional Offices were closed because of the lack of funding. Some of the Regional Offices have Pastoral Centers connected with them. Funding for these Centers have been drastically cut, sometimes by over 50%.

At the same time, many predominantly Hispanic dioceses do not have diocesan offices for Hispanics, and those who do, often do not have full time directors. Some argue that all the programs of such a diocese are being directed at Hispanics. Yet, in the same dioceses, one has to look long and hard to find adequate support for pre-marriage instructions, youth programs, and grassroot movements like the *Cursillo* and *El Movimiento Familiar Cristiano* in terms of personnel, funding and places to assemble.



A Critical Situation: The Lack of Hispanic Vocations

The Church, then, is faced with a critical situation. Who, then, will serve the pastoral needs of the Hispanic community? Ideally, the Hispanic population should be able to provide enough vocations to the priesthood and religious life in order to take care of these needs. Yet, the Church has never had an over abundance of native Hispanic vocations to the priesthood and religious life. It is now being challenged to take a critical look at itself and question itself as to why.

The answer to this question has varied from the impossibility for the majority of Hispanics to maintain a celibate lifestyle to a reluctance for Hispanic parents to let their children choose such a vocation. Certainly, personal and sociological factors are contributing factors to the present state of affairs.

However, it seems that it is only New World Hispanics who traditionally have not opted for priestly and religious roles within the Church. Spain has had such an abundance of vocations that it has sent many missionaries to this hemisphere, Mexico, Central and South America have always been considered as "mission" territory. There has never been a high percentage of native clergy or religious in these countries.

Although the situation in Latin America is now changing, there are still many Church institutions and structures at the diocesan and parochial level which do not have native personnel in key leadership positions.

The Church will soon be celebrating its 500th birthday in Latin America, and this is the situation: the most Catholic countries in the world, wherein almost every newborn is baptized Catholic, do not have a native clergy. Religious Communities of women have been more successful but there is still a gap. The *why* question will not go away. Not only do we need to ask the question *why*, but we need to be open to the answer which begins to explain this reality.

Racism in the United States

I believe that the major reason why there has not been more native Hispanic vocations in this hemisphere is because the Church acted as a racist institution and was correctly perceived as such by the peo-

ple it served.

Before going on to develop how racism has impacted the Latin American Church, I would like to reflect upon our own North American experience of racism within the Church, lest we judge our brothers and sisters of Latin America too harshly.

The North American Church has not been immune from the racist laws, structures and attitudes that have been part of our historical context, and these continue to impact our present day history. We only need to reflect upon the racist statements and policies that have been coming out of Washington over the last six or seven years to realize how operative racism still is.

Once, I was attending a conference in Miami, and the topic of racism and religious communities came up. A woman religious said that she had been very surprised to learn that their original rule prohibited blacks from full membership to their community. This religious community was founded in the United States.

There are many examples of how canonical distinctions between lay members and full members acted as an instrument of segregation. Those members who were thought to be more capable were sent on for further education and missioned in the community's primary ministry. Those who were considered slow learners and less able were given the menial works of the community to do.

Needless to say, many of the minorities ended up in that later category. One reason often used was that even if a minority member were capable enough, the people themselves would not always be that accepting. I am sure that these institutional practices discouraged many from checking out to see if they had a calling to religious life or priesthood.

Naming Our Racism

One reason why we have such difficulty in naming racism as a constitutive cause for our situation today is because we become very defensive when we talk about it. None of us want to be identified as a racist, and fewer still want to admit that we are racist. While many will easily admit that the Church was a racist institution fifteen or twenty years ago, very few of us admit that the Church is still racist today.

Many see racism as an attitude which exists outside the Church or our religious communities. When we think of racism, we think of bigots, "rednecks" and prejudiced people.

One way of not dealing with racism today is to try to make a distinction between the past and the present. We think that if we could only forget the sins of the past, we will be able to start afresh today. Often we hear such comments as, "Why can't we just bury the past and start all over again. I really can't assume responsibility for the way my ancestors behaved." Indeed, such commentaries have great appeal. Yet, such statements do not take into account the great impact that our personal, familial, societal and cultural history has upon our present day development.

In truth, dealing with racism is not easy, because it is one of those "root" causes which manifests itself in so many different ways, even when one thinks that it has been dealt with once and for all. Many of us do not recognize that we cannot help being racist; we grew up in a racist environment where most of our institutions were blatantly racist, and even the language that we used was racist.

Many of us, indeed, had to make an extraordinary, conscious effort to deal with racism, and many of us have done so rather successfully. For those of us who have not yet made that conscious effort to deal with it, we may be surprised to find out just how racist we really are.

As with any other kind of personal, moral fault that we need to deal with, we quickly come to the insight that everyone is racist, whether we be white or black or brown or any other skin color. Yes, we all are racist. However, this truth does not absolve us from doing something about it. It should, in fact, help us to do something about it. It should make us aware that we are not alone in our struggle, that other people before us have had the same starting point and that racism can be overcome.

Neither should this realization make us forget that some victims of racism are more permanently scarred than others. When someone has been victimized by racism for generations, he or she should not be expected to fit into the world that non-victims have created for themselves. Victims bring with them a different perspective, another paradigm. Redemption comes to us through victims.

"When we begin to see why things are the way they are, then we can begin to see how we can change ourselves and our surroundings to better respond to our reality and challenges."

Racism in Latin America

Racism was also a fact of life for the Church of Latin America. Many of us may not be aware of how difficult it was for a non-European to become a priest or a religious in Latin America.

Latin American society was made up of different classes of people. At one end of the scale, there were the Europeans who were citizens of the mother country. These were called *Peninsulares*, those from the peninsula of Spain and Portugal. Then came the *Creoles*, the sons or daughters of *Peninsulares* born in the new world. Next in line were the *Mestizos*, the children of *Peninsulares* or *Creoles* and those peoples indigenous to the country. There were other classes besides these. At the very bottom were the slaves.

These classes had strict social, political and economic roles. For the first 300 years, only *Peninsulares* were allowed to rule. The Crowns of Spain and Portugal only trusted those born in their countries with the duty and responsibility of ruling its colonies and resources. The wars for independence in Latin America were fought for the right of the *Creoles* to rule in place of the *Peninsulares*.

Mestizos and indigenous tribes made up the majority of the population of Latin America. The *mestizos* (in the United States, they were

called "half-breeds") were often the children of non-sacramental marriages, and therefore, were considered illegitimate. The indigenous people of Latin America, on the other hand, were considered "minors" by the Canon Law of the time. That meant that they were considered incapable of making adult decisions for themselves.

This same Canon Law prohibited those born out of wedlock and minors from ordination. Consequently, there were very few native vocations in Latin America.

Another factor which contributed to the scarcity of native vocations in Latin America was the lack of formal education for the *mestizo* and indigenous populations. Up to the end of the last century and the turn of this one, most of the educational institutions were operated and controlled by the Church. Then, as now, the primary beneficiaries of higher education (*colegio* and *universidad*) were those who could support those institutions with their money and political influence. It was therefore rare that *mestizos* and indigenous peoples were ever educated enough to enter into seminaries.

One more consideration should be taken into account in understanding the lack of religious and priestly vocations in Latin America. If a *mestizo* or an indigenous were to become a religious or a priest, he or she had to be content with the servile works of the Church and the religious community. Native vocations were not given responsibilities that included having authority over *peninsulares* and *creoles*. This was not substantially different from the policies and practices of the society outside the Church. However, there were compensations that the outside world could offer to offset one's social position that the Church could not. The more astute and unscrupulous *mestizos* often became wealthy and powerful, at the expense of their less fortunate brothers and sisters.

In 1979, the Bishops of the United States issued a Pastoral Letter entitled, *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, and the subtitle was *Racism in Our Day*. They defined racism in the following way, "Racism is the sin that says some human beings are inherently superior and others are essentially inferior because of race. It is the sin that makes racial characteristics the determining factor for the exercise of human rights." In accepting this definition, there can be no doubt that the institutions and structures of Latin America have been and still are racist. The Church, while at times a heroic, solitary voice for universal

human equality and dignity, was pretty much a product of its time.

Preferential Option

Since the Second Vatican Council, however, a new age has dawned in Latin America for the Church. Identifying and rooting out racism has been its number one challenge for the last twenty, twenty-five years. When the Church of Latin American finally opted to accept and call forth the *mestizo* and indigenous population as full partners in its life and its ministry of evangelization, it was confronted with vicious attacks and persecution by many of its traditional partners, the *peninsulares*, the *creoles* and the wealthy *mestizos*. Racism and its allies, prejudice and oppression, die hard.



The U.S. Hispanic Catholic Experience

In order for us to understand the lack of Hispanic vocations here in the United States, we also need to reflect upon how U.S. Hispanics experienced the Catholic Church. Most of us Catholics who were not classified as a "minority" grew up in territorial parishes. These are parishes whose boundaries determine who their parishioners are. Some of these were ethnic, and others were not. However, most of them had the following common components.

The pastor was usually someone who could speak the language of the parishioners with a great deal of fluency. Sometimes, he was of the same ethnic background. The parish itself was neighborhood centered, and it was easy to create a sense of belonging and com-

munity. The parishioners knew who belonged and who did not. There was a sense of solidarity with one another. They expected the great social events of their lives to take place at the parish. It was there where one got married, baptized their children, educated them, and buried their loved ones. The parish was at the very core of their social lives.

Hispanics, on the other hand, had two basic experiences of Church life here in the United States, and each experience reflected the social, economic and political condition of the Hispanic peoples. For those Hispanics who lived in rural areas, who worked as ranchers and migrants, the Church was a "missionary" one. A missionary would come by at irregular intervals to baptize, hear confessions, give First Communion, marry and catechize, all in the space of a week or two.

The missionary was very often a foreigner, either a Hispanic who was born in Spain or in Latin America, or a non-Hispanic who had learned how to speak Spanish. Missionaries were often very hard on the people they came to save. Many times they condemned religious practices which they considered superstitious and non-Catholic, not recognizing the value that these family practices had in preserving the Faith.

This experience of Church did not give Hispanics a sense of community, nor did it encourage Hispanic youth to ask whether they had vocations to the priesthood or religious life.

For those Hispanics who lived in urban centers and even small cities and villages, the Church was experienced in a different way. Many dioceses took care of its Hispanic Catholics by means of national parishes and parish "mission" churches. A national parish is one which has jurisdiction over its parishioners by reason of their nationality or race, regardless of where they live. Mission churches are satellites of the main parish church and are dependant upon it. National parishes and mission churches worked well in the beginning, for it provided Hispanics with a place to worship and assemble, where they could use the language of their choice. It also gave them a sense of being cared for by the Church.

Nevertheless, Hispanics seldom developed the feeling that they were part of a larger Church or even that the parish Churches they went to were "theirs". It was not that they failed to support them with their money and hard work. Many donated much more than they should

have in time, money and labor to build new structures and remodel old ones.

Rather, there was a feeling that these parishes and structures belonged to the priests and religious communities who staff them. More often than not, these were non-native Hispanics or non-Hispanic natives. Many were culturally conditioned not to trust the people they were serving with major responsibilities. The faithful were often chastised for their ignorance, stupidity and their lack of the proper kind of faith. They were often criticized for their popular religiosity and their social and religious customs which priests and religious did not understand and accept. Thus, separated and segregated from the larger Catholic community which was unprepared or unwilling to make room for them in their parish churches, and sometimes subjected to paternalism/maternalism from those who did serve them, many Hispanic Catholics grew up with the feeling of never really belonging to the Church here in the United States.

Along with the growing awareness of the need to provide adequate pastoral to Hispanics, there is also a growing realization that the future of the Catholic church in the United States will depend, to a great extent, upon its Hispanic peoples.

Hispanic Vocations and the Future

We look to the past so that we can understand the present and prepare for the future. Vocations to the priesthood and religious life are not keeping pace with the many needs that the Church has for ordained ministers and vowed religious. The traditional source for vocations have been the second and third generation American Catholic family. Yet, young men and women from these families are not choosing priesthood and religious life as a life choice in the same numbers as they once were. The reasons for this lack of vocations are varied. I would like to propose two.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has undergone rapid institutional changes. These changes have caused many Catholics, including priests and religious to feel disoriented within the Church, and to question their proper place and role. Such confusion and lack of clarity has been a contributing factor to the lack of vocation to priesthood and religious life.

Another factor is that there has been a shift as to the place where the American Catholic family is on the socio-economic ladder. at the turn of the century, the average American Catholic family was not native to the country, was poor to lower middle class, and struggling to become accepted economically, politically and socially. Today, the average American Catholic family is upper middle class to wealthy, if we exclude Hispanics. The American Catholic family has accepted the quest for the great American dream: the inalienable right to wealth, power and social status. The Catholic young men and women of our country are more interested in making a good deal of money, getting married to the "right" spouse, and being secure and comfortable in a good home and in a good neighborhood. This dream does not leave much room for the simple lifestyle of religious life and a role of service within a Church which has become increasingly critical of that great American dream.

It would be a mistake to believe that it makes little difference to know the historical and cultural reasons for the lack of vocations to priesthood and religious life. It is only by looking at the reasons why something is the way it is that we can begin to create an adequate response to it. It would also be a mistake to assume that the lack of vocations among Hispanics have the same causes as the lack

of vocations for non-Hispanics. In planning out vocation strategies, one has to address identity and role issues as well as materialism when appealing to the non-Hispanic vocation. On the other hand, when appealing to Hispanic vocations, one has to confront racism and low self-esteem. Such radical differences is the main reason why vocation recruiters need to be able to do much more than translate present vocation strategies from English to Spanish.

So, we should not be threatened when minorities ask us to review our vocation and formation policies and practices. Are the vocation recruitment practices being used by our communities and dioceses culturally biased? Are the requirements determining who enters the seminary and religious communities screening out candidates who are of a different race or culture? Such questions may be coming out of a different experience of Church than we are used to.

A Call to Conversion

The American Catholic Church is undergoing a vocation crisis. Yet this crisis has provided us with the opportunity to reflect more critically and creatively as to the meaning of priesthood and religious life for us today in North America, who is being invited and who is being excluded, and what kind of conversion we are being called to undergo in order to make ourselves worthy of vocations.

The United States Catholic Bishops say in the Pastoral Letter, *The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment*, "At this moment of grace we recognize the Hispanic community among us as a blessing from God." Blessings from God are not to be ignored nor taken lightly. I am sure that included in this blessing from God is an abundance of vocations to the priesthood and religious life, waiting to be called and invited, waiting to be welcomed as full and equal partners in the life of the Church, waiting to be fully reconciled into that community which had previously ignored and neglected them. The Hispanic presence, indeed, poses for us a challenge and commitment.

The Passionist Apostolate and Its Specific Difference

It is good, on the occasion of a meeting which brings due recognition and honor to the different Provinces and regions of the Passionist universe, to reflect together on that which unites us in a common difference. What was called at one time (in a terminology of English derivation) a "*common sense*," cannot be a mere averaging out of opinions. Beyond our "provincial" differences, it ought to be that which unites us in the most explicit possible awareness of a specific unity — a unity which transcends our particularity, of course; but which, without abolishing it, raises it beyond until we come to our very originality. I mean the *originality of our very beginning*.

In this first section, I would like to reflect on "*difference*" and the contemporary preoccupation to preserve it. Then, insofar as I can, I will elaborate the concept of our difference. Lastly, I'll ask myself some questions about various ways of exercising and applying it in the present situation.

Difference and Specification

I refrain from all scholastic definitions of difference. I would, however, simply remark with St. Thomas that the divine unity cannot be illustrated in the manifestations of its glory, except through the distinct variety which makes up the richness of our universe. "*Universe*," that is, uni-diversity (*uni-diversité*).



I would observe in this context that the common formula of identity, "x" is "x" (for example, "a dandelion is a dandelion"), is merely an empty tautological affirmation. Above all else, then, I would wish to make a vigorous defense against the classless pretensions of contemporary totalitarianism of a right not to be absorbed into a universal facelessness in which, according to the well known expression, "all cows are black."

It is in this sense, then, assuming to make an original interpretation of Meister Eckhard, I am happy to interpret the "Ego sum qui sum" of Exodus. Ego, he remarks, is a separative pronoun (pronomen discretivum). But this separation, far from being isolationist, is the only manner in which God, and we with him, can be present or immanent in the world of things and of men. Without pride, and simply acknowledging that which makes us and that which we are, each one of us as Passionists has the right to say, Ego sum qui sum: I am who I am, and that which I am.

Given our present day conditions, I do not marvel that there proliferate all over the place personalist manifestos, proclaiming in a variety of ways the right to be different, with a preoccupation to present this difference from and in spite of everyone. What strikes me most in these manifestos is that very often they have emerged as a protest, particularly in the socialist countries, against a dominance that has striven to force all that endeavored to maintain its own difference into the sorry dissolution of uniformity.

The preoccupation with being different, on occasion, smacks of exclusivism or exaggerated egoism, in the jealous preservation of the

individual or collective identity. This certainly is a real risk and I will endeavor not to minimize it. But, and on this I insist, in the measure in which such a preoccupation is the expression of an authentic vocation (by this I mean the voice of one who appeals to that which in himself is irreducible), it is a healthy sign. Moreover, in this preoccupation one may discern, not only respect for a multiform grace which allows its proper splendor to unfold in the multiplicity of its gifts, but also a respect for "others" who certainly are others only in the measure that they could not be that which I am. From this it emerges that the consciousness of our difference, all things considered, is the best means to take one's proper place or to situate oneself in a world which simply would not be a world if it did not allow room for unlimited diversity.

Now that which surprises me in the Church today, at least in its broad outlines, is the contemporary insistence on progress in the opposite direction to that which I've just indicated. One has the impression that religious orders today, influenced by the prevailing global conditions, tend to renege on their difference and not give any further credence to the origins from which they derived. On this account, they succumb to what might be called, the principle of dissolution of spiritual energy, a principle according to which the universal religious (just as bodies and things) tend progressively to identity of equality of temperature or to that which in its final analysis is the cancellation of all distinction, in a word, to the death of the universal religious insofar as "uni-diversite" is concerned.

It is against this dying process, it seems to me, that action should be taken. It would seem, however, that few courses of action are open; the only one in fact that really warrants itself is the reactivation of that which, for the sake of brevity, I would term a consciousness of being and of origin. The two, being and origin, are necessarily related. St. Thomas himself noted that since genesis is a way to being, there must necessarily be affinity between this genesis and this being. Put more simply, the Gospel reminds us that an evil tree cannot bear good fruit, or that you cannot pluck figs from a thistle. Consequently, if we would return to be reborn from our mother's womb, it would necessarily entail knowing the way back or how to revert to the place which is at once the principle of one's being and activity.



On the Passionist Difference

I am not forgetting that we are treating presently of the Passionist apostolate. But I believe that this Passionist "doing" is inseparable from our specific Passionist "being." To be (etre) and to do (agir) are convertibles. It isn't a question of separating them. And since this "being" and "doing" are based on the same principle, the conversion to which I alluded above demands a return to that foundation, i.e., to that which in the founder and in his founding individuality transcends time and the particular place of a foundation historically dated.

Before elaborating the concept of our difference, I would like to put forward a couple of preliminary remarks.

What strikes and surprises me most in the first chapter of our Rule (and I have had occasion to explain this at greater length in another study) is that, in the text which ought par excellence to insist on our specificity, the reader charges right into disappointing generalities.

The aim of this Congregation, you recall, is none other than that proposed for every Christian and, in particular, for every Religious: namely, our personal sanctification. It's really strange. This beginning which is supposed to fix that which specifies us, immediately makes appeal to that which in no way distinguishes us from others. It all happens as if this difference necessarily flees from whoever pursues it. You expect to discover a new America and you realize, after taking stock, that you still haven't left the well-known world where every other Christian and Religious lives. It is less surprising, though, after some careful examination. It is like, for example (and I will not

delay on this), when the celebrated Italian mathematician Peano, wanting to plot-out an axiomatic system in arithmetic, arrived not at a definition of number, as Russell observed, but a totally different series. Will we, too, be condemned then to general determinations, without ever being able to reach that which, in a quality uniquely different from all the rest, is precisely what constitutes the quality or the savor, as when we speak of the savor of a local wine?

This leads me to a second observation. If the difference is so difficult to grasp, is it because we want at all costs to lock it in an abstract definition which is always generic, i.e., off-side of the authentic difference? Or does this difference, which we cannot capture in a notion, perhaps offer itself to a more concrete sensitivity which knows very well how to distinguish between what is Passionist and what isn't, just as our sight distinguishes between black and red, as our palate can tell the difference between one liqueur and another, as our ear distinguishes one note from another note, as our touch distinguishes rough from smooth, our thermal sense tells hot from cold?

For my part, I sense accurately enough, at the end of a certain longstanding density and from experience, what distinguishes us from a Jesuit or a Dominican or a Franciscan, even in spite of all the borrowings that a critical history helps us to discover. I believe that there is amongst us a practice of authority which is not that of sheer commandment; I believe that there is, or rather was, a certain way of softening the distance which separates the cleric from one who is not; a distinct way of celebrating liturgical feasts, with more abundant foodstuffs. And then we must not forget that there is the reference to a history which is properly our own. A history which invokes, as its source, a personality which one cannot confuse with any other. A history which is made-up, as every other history is, of shade and of light. A history which is deposited in each of us as a kind of collective unconscious and which, alongside every clear perception, determines in each of us a certain way of seeing, of judging, in brief, of reacting to things, to events, and to people.

I do not agree with belittling this very precious "sensitivity," which is incorporated in our very existence. But I do believe that it is possible to elevate it to the dignity of a concept.

To begin simply, I only recall what no one ignores, namely, the

existence of a fourth vow which, in some way, has the value of an indicator of specification.

This indicator, it is true, can remain simply in the juridic order. It can distinguish a religious order in the way that a flag can distinguish one nation from another. It is an indication that should not be neglected but which, in the long run, risks dozing off into the drowsiness of a signaling indicator without any real force. It isn't enough therefore to invoke this social difference, real as it is, in our effort to reach our specific difference. I will not pass it by in silence; but I believe that it is necessary to deepen it, to excavate down to the spiritual roots which give the fullness of its significance.

On this question, allow me to make a reflection which I think has great importance. If one studies the principal Rules which, in the history of the various Orders, have determined the great guidelines, you can see that the contents are almost always the same. I will go a bit further. Many practices and customs are to be found, beyond the cultural area of Christianity, even in non-Christian religions. To give an example, I think of certain traits that we have in common with Indian monasticism.



The difference, therefore, doesn't come from the contents.

Where do we find it then? In order to precise the matter, we can use the distinction between the dominant form and the recessive form. Let me explain myself. I do not deny, in order to make things practical, that the Franciscans and the Dominicans have, among their elements, a devotion to the Passion of Christ. But, for whatever importance it might have, it is not that which specifies them as religious Orders. But we can say, following that up, that in our Congregation the Passion of Christ has the value and function of a dominant form; and this dominant form is precisely what, for us, fulfills the role of a principle of specification.

This simple reflection puts us, I believe, on the right path. But if we content ourselves with accepting this and without pushing the concept further, we will only go away, all things considered, with a good platitude. So we ought to question ourselves about this "domi-

nant form" and propose the following questions about it:

A) In what way does this "dominant form," in the last analysis, determine our Passionist "being" (*essere, etre*) and our "doing" (*agire, agir*)?

B) How is it possible and feasible to actualize it in our present situation, that is, in our contemporary world?

I will reply first of all to the former question. The second question which, for many of us will seem the more urgent, being left for the last section of this lecture. It is my opinion that so-called "urgent" problems are never well solved by rushing.

Let us return to the question: In what sense do the Passion and the Cross determine our Passionist "being" and "doing?"

The obvious response, which is not as superficial as it might seem, lies in this: if the Passion and the Cross determine our "being" and our "doing," it is precisely because they have given us our name. Without them, we would no longer be Passionists. An obvious answer, as I said; and, as such, running the risk of disappointing us. To give a name (to "name") today means to put a label on, or to "style" a certain kind of initiative or activity. If the name is to be more than a simple title or an appellation controlled by Church insistence, the name that designates us should have, so to speak, a biblical value; in other words, the name should have an ontological import. I mean, it should be a call, a vocation, a task. In brief, it ought to be a value that enthuses us and which, in each of us, translates into an ought-to-be and ought-to-do.

Finally, that which determines (or specifies) us, insofar as we are Passionists, is the capacity for enthusiasm and, consequently, the degree of ought-to-be and ought-to-do that the Passion of Christ frees in us. If the same fire that consumed St. Paul of the Cross is not in us, hope is useless. In that case it would be best to inscribe over all our houses the Dante phrase: "Abandon hope, all ye who enter here."

In order to better understand what I am trying to suggest, let me make a digression which, in another context, proved itself to have a certain utility.

Consider the following three expressions:

- I believe in God the Father almighty;
- I believe that God is the Father almighty;
- God is the Father almighty.

At first glance, the three formulas seem the same. But in reality, such is not the case.

The first says nothing about God. It specifies the sense or the orientation of a movement of faith; or, if you prefer, the fervor of an outburst.

The second, instead, is already on the path to objectivization. It determines a confession of faith by that which a certain religious society emphasizes, by a modality of belief ("I believe that . . ."). And so one can differentiate it from the faith of all those who do not believe that God has such an attribute.

Lastly, the third sentence, ending the process, has the value of an objective statement, in which a certain proposition is put up for our declaration, for our assent.

If we apply the same formulas to the Passion and Cross of Christ, I would say that the Congregation of Passionists gushed forth from an impulse of faith, from an original enthusiasm, from an "I believe in the Cross of Christ salvation of the world." This "I believe" foundation was that of St. Paul of the Cross. And it is from this fire, from this river of fire that we are born. We exist today, with a true existence, to the extent that we make this origin ours. As the principle of our Passionist "being" and "doing."

The formula "I believe that the Cross of Christ is the salvation of the world" is another turn of the original fire, but already more immediately directed toward what I would gladly call the "confession of Passionist faith." Here is what I mean by that. As you know, the title of our Congregation defines it in reference to the Cross and to the Passion. It is an abbreviation, the syncopated formula of a confession of faith by which a religious society defines, socially, its reasons for existing (*raison d'être*) as a community within the Church. In the same way it distinguishes it from every other religious society which has a right to exist within the ecclesial community.

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The third formula, which concludes the process of objectivization and which I mentioned above, establishes a third level. It begins a reflection, the importance of which we will see later on. For now I just want to situate it in the global economy of our Passionist "being" and "doing." First of all, this formula or level completes the process of objectivization. It does so by establishing the Cross of Christ as the object of a thematic which will be developed as much in philosophy as in theology, in Church history or in Christian art. As you can see, it is a stage beyond the second original formula. Yet it should not be disdained for that reason, even though there may be some who would surely believe that the fervor of our origin is thus separated from the severity of the original concept.

As a conclusion to this digression, these three formulae allow us to define our specific difference. More precisely, this specific difference make a three-level structure in this way: the first level, the most fundamental and that which is always implied or understood, becomes the basis of the second level, that collective confession of faith which makes us a unique religious society in the Church of God and which justifies our name and official destination; and the second level gives the basis, in its turn, for the third, namely, that theoretical area in which the Cross of Christ becomes, by a process of continuing reflection and for which we can use the English term, the Topic (basic

theme, starting place, the heading of a long development) or a properly Passionist thinking.

Such is the ordered structure, or again the law of the three stages of Passionist faith, which determines in an adequate way our specificity.

It should be noted in passing that this tripartite structure is not just a simple bureaucratic juxtaposition of three levels, like three levels of a house. These three levels "communicate" among themselves in such a way that the first natures the second, and the first and second sufficiently form together the necessary possibility of the third.

It is absolutely necessary to respect this linking-together, under the penalty of otherwise making an intolerable vivisection upon our Passionist life. Do not think that this is just a philosophical elucubration. This connection between the three movements of Passionist faith is a vital necessity. If the first stage is lacking, it is useless to hold on to the second; or, then it would be only a social body without a soul, somehow continuing in existence only by a kind of law of social inertia or acquired speed. So, too, the third level can only be maintained if it is fed (if I may use the phrase) by the original fervor of an "I believe in the Cross of Christ salvation of the world" and by the lucidity of an "I believe that (collectively) the Cross of Christ is the salvation of the world."

Summing up, then, I would say this: the first level determines our Passionist "being" (*etre*); the second determines our collective Passionist "life" (*vie*); the third determines our Passionist "thought" (*pensee*). Being, life, thought — these three form the unity of our Passionist existence. In a word, I would say that these three movements, in their unity, define the Passionist trinity, indispensable for our survival and development.

*The Dynamic of the Cross, or,
On the Specificity of the Passionist Apostolate*

In concluding this exposition, I can now treat the second question which was formulated above in this way: How is it possible, in the present situation, to actualize our Passionist "being" and "doing" in the form of an apostolate, that is, of a mission within the Church.

The answer to this question ought to follow the structure of the

levels previously defined. And since a mission (or an apostolate) is defined in terms of operation, I will try in concluding this lecture to precise the specific operations which correspond to each of the levels.

What is (or what are) the operation (or operations) which correspond to the first level: that of the "I believe in the Cross of Christ salvation of the world?"

At the risk of surprising you, I will address this proposition by speaking of an operation which does nothing beyond itself and which can therefore be called, according to the thinking of the American mathematician John Yarnelle, "the indifferent element." By designating this operation as "indifferent," it does not mean that it can be neglected. Far from it. Rather, it is called this precisely because, added to every other apostolic operation or work, it does not change it at all inasmuch as it makes it possible and necessary in depth.

In this regard, let me give an easily understood explanation. Everyone knows that in arithmetic, the zero added to any other number, in addition, does not change that number: $0 + 1 = 1$. This means that the "indifferent element," although it does not do anything, is nonetheless the most indispensable element because, according to the way we conceive it, it conditions the very possibility of arithmetic. Similarly, this first level of speaking does nothing, and, in this sense, is the spiritual or mystical equivalent of the mathematical zero, in that it is the most indispensable of operations. It is that without which nothing would be accomplished that would be truly fruitful and without which we would be, according to the apostle Paul, only cymbals more or less resounding.



I see the symbol of this operation in the attitude of the Virgin, of whom it is said in John's Gospel: "Stabat mater ejus juxta crucem" ("By the cross stood His mother"). She stood erect near the Cross. To stand erect, near is an operation which undoubtedly does not accomplish anything great, but which still decides everything, in depth. "She stood erect near the Cross" is exactly the same as was, in another context, the Word of Johannine prologue where the Word also "was with God." He was thus with God before the world was and was the reason the world became possible as the result of an authentic creation. Note that sublime imperfect tense: *erat*. It is an operation that never ends, an operation that puts us in contact with eternity. It is an operation which can be broken down, if you will, in the following manner: to-be-in, to-be-toward, to-be-near to (*etre-dans, etre-vers, etre-aupres de*). In this regard and paradoxical way, our ancients, spoke about an "unmoving movement" ("immobile movement"). And, in fact, this "to-be-toward" (*etre-vers*) is a good description of a kind of mobility, likewise well translated with the preposition "toward." St. Thomas, in his trinitarian theology, notes that this (mobility-toward) constitutes, in their impulse toward their correlative, the divine Persons of the Trinity. And this movement is really a repose; a repose well emphasized by the use of the preposition "in" (*dans*), making us dwell "there where our heart is." Lastly, the preposition "near to" (*apud*) is like the unity of this repose and this movement.

These three aspects (of the "indifferent element," of the operation proper to the first level of our Passionist "being" and "doing") form the only sufficient expression of the "I believe in the Cross of Christ" which we have taken as the origin of the Congregation. If it be true that a being conserves and develops itself in virtue of the same causes which gave it birth, then we have to conclude that each of us, in order to be faithful to our proper origin, ought to reproduce in ourselves this operation that we have termed "indifferent." We will have to do it with the savor proper to our own individuality. It is this "indifferent" activity or operation which will be, in a literary sense, our fundamental poetry, that will keep us indefinitely in the youth of our Passionist "being".

From this first operation we derive the second. This is the one that in another work, I have called transitive and which one can compare, after a fashion, with the creative activity of the Word. So we

can define this second operation as the poem of our original poetry. It corresponds to that dynamic postulate expressed in the celebrated phrase: "The good is diffusive of itself." If the apostolate is diffusive of a good, and of the Good, it necessarily presupposes that which I have called elsewhere a "Good Friday spell," after a famous musical.

What would an apostolate signify that was not the heartfelt diffusion of something that we have in our hearts? We will not pass to the "I believe that the Cross is the salvation of the world" and thus to the spreading of this salvation, if there is not first the "we believe in this Cross as the salvation of the world."

Here again it would be helpful to divide this transitive action and to propose, in a kind of progression, the diverse grades of this operation.

The first, and seemingly the most simple, consists in diffusing among ourselves the interior joy that we have within us by the simple action of presence and radiance. At one time in a prisoner of war camp, I myself knew some exceptional men from the destiny of the interior joy which they let shine through. It was good to be near them, as it was good for the three privileged disciples to be near the Lord when his glory shone at Thabor. If we, with our "being," give to others nothing of the fullness of this joy, there is no hope. The Cross of Christ will be, as Nietzsche believed, the morbid contagion of a kind of sadness or the impotence of a spiritual phthisis. The first thing, therefore, is to create around us what we call an area of gravitation.

The first, and seemingly the most simple, consists in diffusing among ourselves the interior joy that we have within us by the simple action of presence and radiance.

Closely allied to this first grade of transitive action is the second, which I would express in the words of St. Paul: "The spiritual man judges all things." I have often had occasion to observe how men of today like in us *this liberty of judgment* which we derive from the Cross and by looking, from the height of the Cross, upon the world about us. They and the world are waiting for a new word from us, something that will be more than just an echo of the opinions that swirl around us like a new common sense. In this regard, the Cross is a kind of critic-in-action on the evident pretenses holding sway over the major part of our contemporaries in the name of "wisdom" or "power" (cf. I Cor. 1), the behavior of conformity, we ought not be copies of this conformity but, on the contrary, *free men* who are allowed, in full liberty, to put up for discussion in an intelligent way all that is commonly accepted.

To this second grade, I will now add a third which is more difficult to actualize. Recently the American theologian Harvey Cox has noted its necessity in a book with the rather original title, *The Feast of Fools*. The fools of the Cross, in the history of Christianity, became a *power for derision* which emphasized the ridiculousness of the powers of this world. I have dreamed, on my part, of a theater of the absurd which might reactivate that derision of the "powers" of whatever kind in our great cities, profoundly bothered and bored as they are. Although we should not imitate them in all of their eccentricities, the history of spirituality tells us of some "fools of Christ" who did exactly that.

I believe in the *power of a positive laugh*, which underlines the ridiculousness of the important things of this world; it is a healthy laugh, the saving power of which it seems that we in the Congregation have forgotten a bit.

In the fourth place, I am watchful about not forgetting all that more directly concerns our traditional apostolate. In this regard, let me again make two observations.

The first refers to our congregation.

I understand the preoccupation on the part of our superiors to increase our relatively small numbers. But I maintain that we will grow in numbers if, without worrying about propaganda, we are careful to present ourselves just as we are, *in the simplicity and the joy of our life*.

Our apostolate today is less the apostolate of the Word, than that of *action*. Let me clarify. The "Word of the Cross" should not be chained-up. We ought to renew, each according to his capacity and the possibilities offered by our respective locales, the kerygma of the Cross. We ought also to promote the Passion, for which we have made a special vow, in the hearts of the faithful of whatever social class. But having said this, and it must be said, I think that the efficacy of the Cross is manifested by a kind of action which is detailed by the final judgment in the celebrated chapter of St. Matthew's gospel: "... I was naked and you clothed me; I was thirsty and you gave me to drink; I was hungry and you gave me something to eat;" and so on.

Briefly, it is necessary that the Word of the Cross *is verified in our activities* on behalf of justice in the world. This means concretely: it is not enough that the Word of the Cross is true, to use the phrase, *in se*; there is also a need that we "*do*" *this truth* (veritatem facientes in caritate), making it a power in changing the world; and the world will believe our deeds more easily than our words. More exactly, the need is to have our words take on a more efficacious dimension that would make them more credible or "*viable*," as the American say. Our "Word" needs to become more *operative* by means of our generosity.

In line with this, I hold that this idea continually imposes a new hermeneutics about our vow of poverty. Up until now the more common exegesis centered this first vow around our personal sanctification or on the "interior of the congregation." The newer approach, which I ardently hope will be loyally implemented, gives it an apostolic interpretation, centrifugal and diffusive of our goods. Perhaps by putting it in relation to the rigors of the final judgment, we will give to that "I" of Christ (spoken of in St. Matthew's Gospel) that face of light, which illumines the disinherited of every kind that knock at our doors. The glory of Christ ought to shine upon the poor in such a way that, apostolically and as the congregation of the Cross and Passion, we can assume the responsibility of making Christ present in this numberless multitude which still has only a human face. Today, is not *one of the major tasks of our specific apostolate to make alive the name of Christ suffering in a human face*? I allow myself to ask the question, without illusions about the

difficulty of putting into actual practice the new interpretation of our poverty, the coming of which I have welcomed. At least it is right that the question be asked, and asked clearly.

To the third level of the structure of the Passionist *Credo*, as I have outlined it, corresponds that which we call, for want of a better phrase, the theoretical operation or activity. More and more it seems inseparable from our specific apostolate, in my destination. The Cross thus becomes what I have called a *Topic*, and *area of reflection*. And this area is important today because we live in a world which Maritain said has arrived at the "reflective age." No longer can we content ourselves with beautiful images or with clear dogmatic statements, although they may be necessary. We, too, have to enter into this age of critical reflection, difficult and thankless as it may be. Here again, it would help to make this speculative-critical activity a bit more concrete.

To make the Cross of Christ's a "theoretical object," susceptible of being phrased in workable formulated propositions, supposes first of all (according to the Thomistic theory which inspired me in the preceding paragraph) that we make it the light under which we consider and contemplate everything that comes under our reflection in one way or another. The Cross thus becomes the unifying principle of our intellectual life.

Having said this, this theoretical area of study centered on the Cross should be spelled out and organized in a methodical way. For the time being, and without entering into particulars that do not pertain to this discourse, I think that a systematic division of this "staurological" field of study could be organized around three headings of unequal size. Before analyzing them a bit, let me name them.

I would distinguish an area which I would call the *esthetic* section; then, the *theological-philosophical* section; and finally, a section I would put under the title of *ecumenical*.

The esthetics of the Cross have to do with all the artistic or literary works referring to the suffering Christ. And here we have to distinguish. The first job is to collect such items. This would become a collection which would permit easy access to whatever, in the history of Christian art or literature, the major works treating in some way of the "Good Friday Spell" we spoke of earlier. But this is not

enough. Each one of us then, according to our own preferences, should choose from this great abundance of material so widely available, whatever can nourish and further our Passionist sensibility. Because, and I insist on this, none of us can live in a world becoming ever more prosaic without a minimum of poetry. So each of us, by a principle of personal selection, ought to select from among the sacred texts in literature or the arts, music or painting, whatever seems most capable of stimulating his fervor and revealing to him another aspect of the multiform grace of the *suffering Christ*.

Because it is more well known, I will not insist on the necessity of theological and philosophical reflection under the Cross. Today, more than in past times, we have the means not only of *informing* ourselves, but, what is rarer, the means of *forming* ourselves. This means to have, under a staurological *theologoumenon*, a personal mind-set which would be not just a literary conceit, but a coefficient of originality that could enrich the common patrimony of the congregation.

Lastly, I referred to an ecumenical section of "Passiological" studies. In saying this, I meant all that the Cross of Christ which allows Christians of the different confessions to join together in a common and essential thought. But I am also thinking, by reason of my personal experience, of all those who do not pertain, whether near or far, to our Christian community. I have the naivete to believe that the Cross of Christ can still speak to people of the East and of the West, and that they are not as insensible as might be thought to that divine and human fascination that emanates from the cross. Here I am touching an area of reflection that I am aware is not open to all of us. Nonetheless, it seemed right to me to make at least a modest allusion to it.

In concluding this discourse, I am conscious of only having proposed a program for your reflection. As a finale, I simply note three things:

- the necessity of an acute awareness of our *specific difference*;
- the necessity of *thinking about this difference* according to the three axes of the Passionist Credo, in his hierarchial structure; and
- the necessity of *radiating* in an activity of presence, diffusion and reflecting, "the length, the breadth and the depth

of the charity of Christ."

All this expressed a duty which is truly an "infinite work." But I believe that fortune smiles on the brave, and "the courage to be" (in the beautiful phrase of Tillich) is the only way, today, to exist truly.

Our apostolate today is less
the apostolate of the Word,
than that of action.

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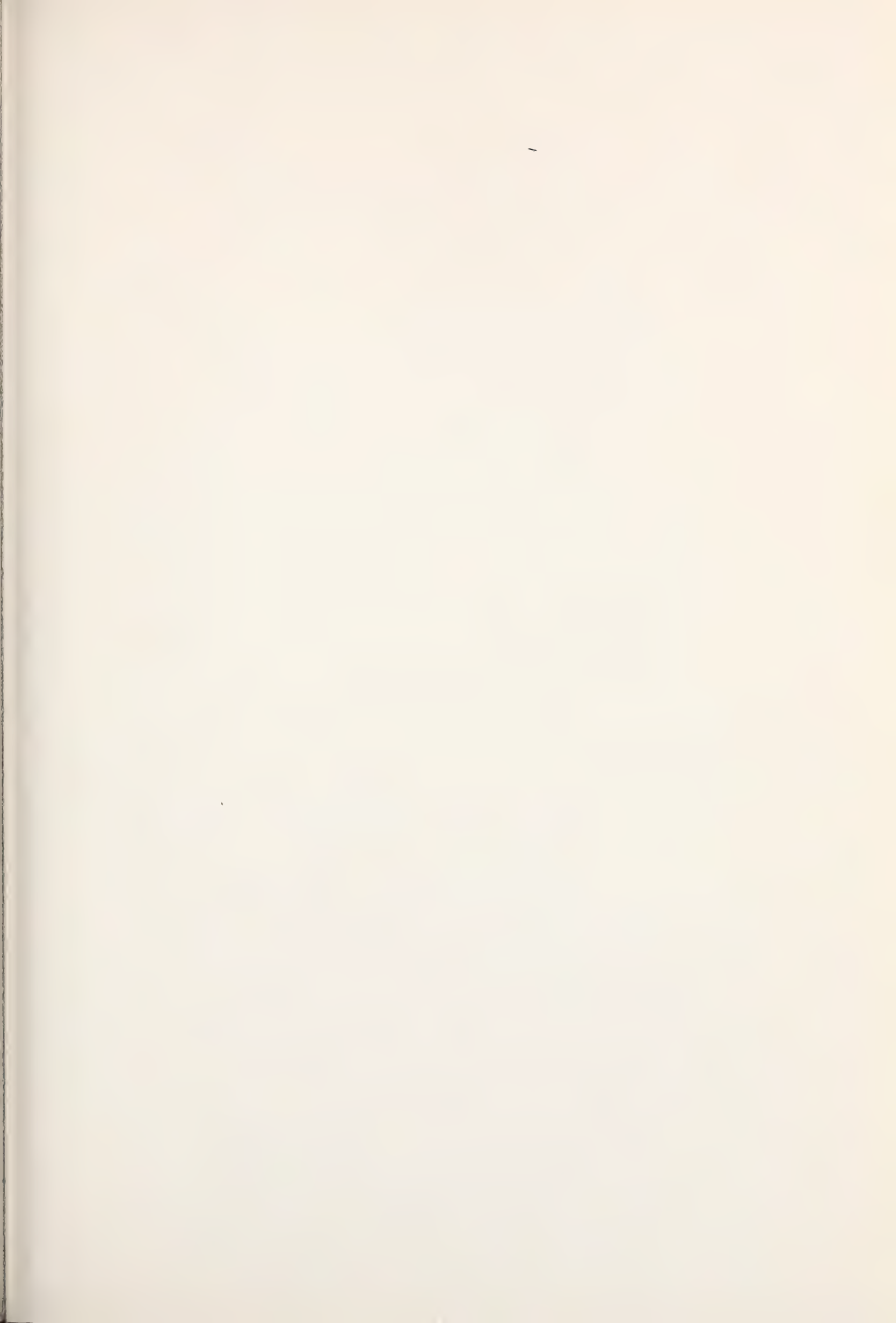
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The Passionist

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PREFACE

We open this issue with the final segment of the series of commentaries on our **Constitutions** by Fr. Harry Gielen, C.P. These commentaries were first given at the St. Patrick's Province Congress in June, 1985. In this issue, Fr. Gielen takes up Chapter III, "Our Community at Prayer," and centers his reflection on two basic areas of our prayer experience: first, the Eucharist as it relates to the Passion and to loving service and then, second, solitude and its contribution to our prayer and common life. We, the editorial board, thank Fr. Harry for allowing us to offer these very fine commentaries to Passionists around the world.

In his article "A Ride on the F Train," Fr. Paul Wadell, C.P. continues to develop the themes of our common life and ministry, though from a slightly different perspective. In this second article in a series of three, Fr. Paul recalls his most formative moral experience in which he identifies the beginning of the moral life. In the "kindness of strangers we have chanced to see as friends," he perceives a paradigm of the meaning of the cross and a way of describing the formative power of Passionist community life and ministry.

In "Naked Healers" Fr. Francis Keenan, C.P. continues his prayerful reflection on suffering as revealed in his work as chaplain in the emergency room at Lutheran General Hospital. He uncovers and holds up special moments of insight into the lives of the medical professionals he knows through his ministry.

We conclude this issue with a chapter from a new book on the Passionists in the United States of America which is being written by Fr. Roger Mercurio, C.P. The chapter presented here recounts the story of Fr. Fidelis Kent Stone, a pivotal figure in the development of the Passionists in North and South America.

Michael Higgins, C.P.
Editor

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Our Community at Prayer

Prayer in the Life of Jesus

Prayer takes place within a limitless solidarity that encompasses time and place. When praying we insert ourselves into a rich tradition that has marked our human condition, a tradition which pervades the whole of human history. From the most remote periods of human history up till our modern era of secularization people have prayed and continue to pray. It is from that perspective that J.B. Metz answered the question once put to him whether we were able to pray after Auschwitz: "We are able to pray after Auschwitz because people have continued to pray in that horrible hell."

The Judeo-Christian tradition is certainly one of the main pillars which carries this worldwide solidarity of people whose existence is given sense and direction by prayer.

Christian faith is essentially what E. Jungel calls "an experience with experience," that is to say: within the experience of real life as it is, another experience is made which transcends or discloses ordinary facts and events. And prayer, in its various forms, is the affirmation of this transcendence or disclosure. In Jesus' life this "experience with experience" is spelled out in a love language, in a language of unheard-of intimacy. God, for him, became "Abba," Dad. Insofar as we can trace the spiritual development of Jesus (his growth in knowledge and wisdom) we see that it was a series of crucial "Abba-experiences." The twelve-year-old boy whose dawning vocation made him give his parents the slip and stay behind, fascinated, in the temple at Jerusalem, excused himself for what he

had done by saying: "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" He seems to have had some special experience of God as his Father during those days in Jerusalem. Twenty years later when he went to be baptized in the Jordan by John, the adult had an experience similar to that of the child. As he prayed, he heard a voice, the voice of God as his Father: "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). This was so overwhelming a spiritual experience that he proceeded from there to think it over and pray.

Two further key episodes illustrate the developing experience of God as Father in the life of Jesus. His experience of transfigured ecstasy on the mountain was again accompanied by God's voice as Father: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him." Later in Gethsemane, not now in ecstasy but in agony, it was not the Father speaking to him, but him speaking to the Father that we hear: "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but yours be done."

In special moments of his life Jesus was thus strengthened by this intimate relationship with God as Father. Those nights in prayer on the hillsides must have passed in hours of intimate union with God his Father, in an intensity which our thoughts cannot hope to penetrate.



What Jesus experienced in prayer he taught to all. For everyone, God was a loving Father, boundlessly compassionate, infinitely understanding. He cared for all people, had a providence towards them. The hairs of their heads were numbered in love. Every human being was precious to God. It was obvious that Jesus' relationship with God as Abba was the most real thing in his life (cfr J. Dalrymple,

The Cross as Pasture, London, 1983, p. 31).

E. Schillebeeckx writes:

In the history of disaster and suffering in which Jesus stood, there was no basis or even occasion for finding anything which could explain meaningfully the unconditional assurance of salvation which was such a characteristic of his message. For Jesus, such a hope, expressed in his proclamation of the nearness of God's liberation and mercy toward man, unmistakably has its basis in an experience of contrast. On the one hand there is the stubborn history of disaster, disturbance, intolerance and unrighteousness, and on the other hand Jesus' own special experience of God, his Abba experience. On the basis of his Abba experience, Jesus could bring people the message of a hope which is not to be derived from our world history. The Abba experience of Jesus is an experience of God as a power of liberation and love for mankind, which says no to all that is evil and causes people pain. For Jesus, people are people for whom God cares. Although attempts have been made to make Jesus simply the good man *par excellence*, the supreme example of humanity, we shall never recognize him if we simply remove or exclude from his life his special relationship with God. For it is precisely in this relationship that the meaning and the power of his message, his parables and his liberating lifestyle lie concealed. Without the basis of Jesus' Abba experience, the *promise*, which can provide a basis for positive hope, falls to the ground and Christian hope is exchanged for a problematical utopia, the utopia of our closed-in humanity with its great expectations, illusions and desires, all without any reason for an absolute confidence. (*God among us. The Gospel Proclaimed*, London, 1983, p. 88-89.)

By baptism we have the Spirit within us whose work is to pray in us the prayer of Abba: "The Spirit you have received is not a spirit of slavery leading you back into a life of fear, but a spirit that makes us sons, enabling us to cry 'Abba! Father' (Romans 8:14). So often

*'What Jesus experienced
in prayer he taught to all.'*

in prayer we picture what we are trying to do as a search for God, an attempt to capture him, a reaching out beyond ourselves, some sort of stretching out towards a far away God. This is an incorrect picture. The correct picture is that we are one in our depths with Christ, branches of the vine. He ceaselessly now enjoys communion with the Father, "seated at His right hand, always making intercession for us." That is what is going on now, and by our union with Christ and by the Holy Spirit that we have been given, we can join in that heavenly communication both while we are at work and especially when we are at prayer. Our "experience with the experience" should grow into an existential confession of faith of the kind that is expressed by St. Paul in his letter to the Romans:

I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels or demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

The Eucharist

I will limit my reflections on the Eucharist to the two important dimensions of this mystery that are so central to our Christian faith:

- (1) The relationship between the Eucharist and Jesus' Passion; and
- (2) The Eucharist as a call to loving service.

The Relationship Between the Eucharist and Jesus' Passion

The Gospel narratives of the Last Supper and the Passion are presented to us in a significant relationship.

- X. Leon-Dufour speaks of a game of mirrors between the two.
By his words over the bread and the cup, Jesus expresses

in a condensed form what is going to happen on that awful day which is approaching. The narrative of the Passion is a working out in some sense of what Jesus says at the Last Supper. The Last Supper narrative is like a concave mirror which shows over a small area the whole length and breadth of the Passion.

And the same author continues:

It is true that one could accept the story of the institution of the Eucharist as an episode inserted as part of a biographical narrative; in fact, the traditional account of the Last Supper, showing how Jesus is in control of his destiny and freely disposes of it, was introduced at a later stage into a great Passion narrative with the purpose of helping the reader to accept the bare, naked character of the latter. What is more: at no point in the Passion narrative is anything said about the import and the meaning of the Passion for the disciples and for all mankind. Was it not necessary that at some particular point this should be made clear to the fullest possible extent? Jesus was not satisfied with merely undergoing the Passion; not only did he give to his death the meaning of the gift of himself, but he realized fully that his fidelity to God and to men would bear the fruit of liberation which would save the world. (X. Leon-Dufour, *Le Partage du Pain Eucharistique selon le Nouveau Testament*, Paris 1982, p. 325-326.)

Two actions, in the Upper Room and on Calvary, correspond to two narratives: the Last Supper and the Passion. They are related by being two types of "sacrifice." At Golgotha, Jesus offers his life by an act which could be called a "personal sacrifice." In the Upper Room, he desired to symbolize this personal sacrifice by a liturgical action which, in a certain sense, might come to be called a "cultic sacrifice." But this sacrifice has nothing in common with those of the Old Testament except that the praise offered beforehand celebrates the victory of God who saves his Son from death and who gives birth to the Church. L. Bouyer makes the pertinent remark:

The words "Do this in memory of me," have been the object of endless discussions among modern exegetes, in

as far as they admitted or did not admit as probable that Jesus could have instituted, by such an express formula, a ceremony to be continued. Dom Gregory Dix has had the merit to show that the question is put in a wrong way. The renewal of the religious meal did not raise any problem, since the Eucharist, for Jewish people, was not new in its ritual form (which they would have kept anyway, both after and before Jesus), but it was new in its content. Thus the accent is not put on the prescription: "Do this," but rather on the precision: "Do this (understood:henceforth) *in memory of me.*" (L. Bouyer, *Eucharistie: Theologie et Spiritualite de la Priere Eucharistique*, Paris 1966, p. 106-107.)

Last Supper, cross and Mass appear to constitute three poles of thought. In fact they are grouped in pairs: The Mass is linked to the Last Supper, the Last Supper is linked to the cross in such a way that, in a sense, the Mass is linked to the cross. If the Mass represents Calvary, it does not repeat it. It is rather like the earth which, each morning, presents itself to the sun, even if we persist in saying that the sun rises each morning. Each day, the Church presents herself to Calvary by repeating the actions that Jesus used in the Upper room, which anticipated not only his death but also his resurrection.



The Eucharist as a Call to Service

That the life of the faithful, as much in the Old Testament as in the New Testament, is not seen exclusively in cultic terms; that the cult itself may miss its goal and become a lie — this possibility and this danger are often evoked and condemned in the Bible. Just to quote two texts by way of example:

Listen to this word, you cows of Bashan living in the mountain of Samaria, oppressing the needy, crushing the poor . . . I hate, I despise your feasts, I take no pleasure in your solemn festivals. When you offer me holocausts, I reject your oblations. Let me have no more the din of your chanting . . . But let justice flow like water and integrity like an unfailing stream. (Amos 4:1, 5:21-24.)

So then, if you are bringing your offering to the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering before the altar, go and be reconciled with your brother first, and then come back and present your offering. (Matthew 5:23-24.)

The Gospel of John establishes a real equivalence between the eucharistic liturgy and the service of the brothers. At the end of Jesus' life, when his "lifting up" is imminent, there is also an account of Jesus' last evening with his disciples. The similarities between the two sequences, the Synoptic and the Johannine, are striking: the same situation of a passover-like gathering, the last meal that Jesus has with the Twelve in the course of which Jesus symbolizes his imminent death, the fruit of which will be the union of all believers with him. The major difference in the Gospel of John is that the washing of the feet takes the place of the eucharistic institution: the narrative of the washing of the feet uses another register of language, the existential, to convey what the more cultic narrative of the Last Supper relates. Both acts show the same gift of the self, the service offered to his own. By laying down and then taking up his outer garment again, Jesus symbolizes the giving up of his life and the receiving of it again, once his work has been accomplished. The objective in Jesus' mind is the same: the communion with himself as he is given up for the salvation of the world, or better, the "having part with

him" which he promises to those who let him wash their feet, i.e., those who accept the gift he makes of his life by his passion and death.

The correspondence between the two is evident: by replacing the liturgical action of the Eucharist by the actual example of service, John substitutes here for the sacrament the true reality it symbolizes, i.e., the mutual service of charity.

As far as the call to "remember" is concerned, the similarity remains clear. Instead of "do this in memory of me," Jesus says, "Do you understand what I have done? You call me Master and Lord, and rightly, so I am. If I then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have given you an example so that by reason of what I have done for you, you might do yourselves." We are very close to the idea of "anamnesis": Do this in memory of me. With John, today we see the necessity of "doing," because of the example left by Jesus. As soon as "example" is mentioned, we are dealing with "memory" — a memory which is made active and present by the works of the disciples.

So, two kinds of memorial are asked of the disciple of Jesus, the one liturgical and the other lived out as service. As they gathered around the table, the first Christians recognized with joy the presence of the Risen one in their midst; they recalled the commandment of anamnesis given by the Lord at his last meal with them; and thus, by remembering what Jesus did on that last evening to crown his whole life, they made a ritual of their gatherings, giving them the form of a eucharistic meal.

On the other hand, as the fourth Gospel makes explicit, Jesus left behind him another form of memorial to be carried out, something that he called "the example I have given," i.e., the washing of the feet. So two kinds of memorial were required on the part of his followers, the eucharistic memorial and the memorial of service as symbolized by the gesture of Jesus as he washed the feet of his disciples. His word over the bread and the cup, his washing of the feet: this is what the believer must do "in memory of him," do in the way that Jesus exemplified.

The Church is invited to share in two different actions, the one in its life of worship, the other in its life in the world, but both centered around the same focal point: the love of the brethren. The

one symbolized by food and drink, the other by the various acts of service, the new life that Christians have. The one and the other show forth a presence over and above an absence, whether it be a liturgical action in which the Lord makes himself present in order to bring life to believers or whether it be in an act of charity by which the Lord is met in the little ones in their misery.

The memorial which is there in the liturgy and the memorial which touches Jesus at work in us in the mutual service of the brethren work together in a complementary fashion. The liturgy recalls the concrete fulfillment of service by constantly referring to him who lived out a life of fidelity to God and men. Service must nourish itself in liturgy if it is to remain authentic: it finds there the heart of Christian life. Hence the liturgy does not run the risk of being an escape from the world in which Jesus lived and died, and our action in the world remains intrinsically linked to the service of Him who longed to share the Passover meal with us until it is fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.



Solitude as Related to Prayer and Community

Fear of solitude is a widespread phenomenon in today's society. There are many factors contributing to this phenomenon. Technology and industry may have expanded man's producing possibilities, at the same time they have estranged man from himself. He does not participate anymore, at least directly, in the process of providing in his vital needs. The things he makes are not shaped with his hands or from the inspiration of his heart. He is cut off drastically from primary groups and often even from family life. He is manipulated by a society that creates artificial needs without giv-

ing the means to fulfill them. Interaction takes place on the level of functions, rather than on the level of real people. The passion to dominate the world has also estranged man from nature itself. The world has become a place for competitive work rather than for meaningful living together. Everything seems geared towards filling up or killing time in order to avoid that one experience, the emptiness of life. The flight from solitude is in fact a flight from the confrontation with the fear of loneliness.

What an American Jesuit says about the American fear of solitude could generally be applied to almost any Western nation:

Individual identity is sacrificed in an effort to stay close to the herd, to be no different from others in thought, feeling or action. To stand aside, to be alone, is to assert a personal identity which refuses to be submerged. Society will not tolerate this. Innumerable social features are designed to prevent it: stadiums to accommodate thousands at sports events; open doors of private rooms and offices; club cars on trains; shared rooms in colleges and boarding houses; countless clubs, organizations, associations, and societies; canned music (for silence is unbearable) piped into hospitals, railway cars, and supermarkets.

The unwritten code of our culture prohibits aloneness and this is a causative factor for a prolonged identity crisis: the obstacle our society imposes to prevent personal reflection. (Barry McLaughlin, S.J., *Nature, Grace and Religious Development*, pp. 46-47; quoted by Thomas Merton, *Contemplation in a World of Action*, p. 61.)

Solitude and Prayer

When A.N. Whitehead in the frequently quoted line in his *Religion in the Making* says that "Religion is what man does with his solitariness," it is clear that he means more than aloneness. For when solitariness moves into a religious dimension, a man is not only physically apart but he has begun to ponder who he is and why he is as he is and what his life is meant for. Whitehead also seems to

be implying that solitariness is the right climate for this further dimension. He wraps up the matter with his blunt statement: "If you are never solitary, you are never religious."

Solitude, as any other human situation, is an ambiguous reality. It can lead us into despair, into melancholy, into life-flight. It cannot as such be equated with religion or prayer. It is only when we *do* something with it, that it reveals its specific potentialities of binding (re-ligare) us to God, of making us discover that in our aloneness we are not alone, but that He is with us.

That is why, in the letters of St. Paul of the Cross, the emphasis is much more on *interior* than on exterior solitude. To quote a few examples:

Physical solitude is a good thing, when it is accompanied by holy virtues and prayer; but a better thing is the solitude of the mind in that holy interior desert in which the soul is completely immersed in God. (Lettere, III, 745)

If you went into the deserts of Nitria or Thebaide without that (the interior temple of his spirit) then the solitude of those deserts would be of no profit to you at all; but with that spirit you always live in that sacred desert, even when you are in the midst of crowds. (Lettere, III, 754)

Take to heart that divine interior solitude, enter with faith and love into the deepest of that sacred desert, and get completely lost in God. Love and be silent . . ." (Lettere, III, 191)

An echo of these admonitions is to be found in many places in Thomas Merton's writings:

A man becomes a solitary at the moment when, no matter what may be his external surroundings, he is suddenly aware of his own unalienable solitude and sees that he will never be anything but solitary. From that moment, solitude is not potential, it is actual.

However, actual solitude always places us squarely in the presence of an unrealized and even unrealizable possibility of "perfect solitude." But this has to be properly

understood: for we lose the actuality of the solitude we already have if we try, with too great anxiety, to realize the material possibility for greater exterior solitude that always seems just out of reach. Actual solitude has, as one of its integral elements, the dissatisfaction and uncertainty that come from being face to face with an unrealized possibility.

It is not a mad pursuit of possibilities, it is the humble acquiescence that stabilizes us in the presence of one enormous reality which is in one sense already possessed and in another a "possibility" — and object of hope. (*Thoughts in Solitude*, New York, 1958, p. 81.)

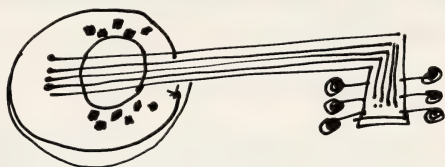
As soon as a man is fully disposed to be alone with God, he is alone with God no matter where he may be — in the country, the monastery, the woods or the city. (*ibid.*, p. 96.)

To stress the priority of interior solitude is not to deny the value of exterior solitude, especially of moments of silence during daily activities and of periods of protracted withdrawal from involving occupations. Religious life will not remain authentic and inspired without creating and cultivating forms or expressions of exterior solitude.

Dr. William Sullivan, a spiritual leader of a generation ago, expresses the debt he owed to his seminary training in the use of solitude:

There is no species of training that I ever underwent to which I owe more than to the habit of regular periods of inner solitude. Solitary we must be in life's great hours of moral decision; solitary in pain and sorrow; solitary in old age and going forth to death. Fortunate the person who has learned what to do in solitude and brought himself to see what companionship he may discover in it. What fortitude, what content. By a great blessing I had an aptitude for these hours of quiet reflection and grew to love them . . . to be alone and still and thoughtful bestowed upon me the richest joy I knew and for this

priceless cultivation I shall be thankful always. (quoted in *Worship*, May 1981.)



The ground of solidarity as the ground of interior solitude is one and the same. It is to discover at the heart of things that our solitariness is transcended and that we are not alone but that *He* is in this whole scene with us, and that we are all in this together. This view is wonderfully gathered up in a letter of counsel thought to have been written by the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* that says:

Silence is not God, nor speaking; fasting is not God, nor feasting; solitude is not God, nor company . . . He lies hidden between them and no work of yours can possibly discover him save only your heart's love. Reason cannot fully know him for he cannot be thought, possessed or discovered by the mind. But loved he may be and chosen by the artless, affectionate longing of your heart. Choose him, then, and you will find that your speech has become silent, your silence eloquent, your fasting a feast, your feasting a fast, and so on. Choose God in love . . . For this blind thrust, this keen shaft of longing love will never miss the mark, God himself. (A Letter About How to Read One's Interior Inspirations, *Contemplative Review*, 10 (1977), p. 15-16.)

By leaving behind from time to time our many self-affirming actions and becoming "useless" in the presence of God, we transcend our inner fears and affirm our God as the one in whose love we find our strength and security. Worship together, although extremely important for the life of the community, should not be the only form of prayer. It is crucial for the long-term life of a community that

we continuously encourage one another to spend time alone with God. This might be difficult or sometimes painful but it is a real service to our life together. After all, a house is stronger when the pillars on which it rests do not depend on each other but have their own separate foundations.

Solitude and Community

Certainly in a period of history in which we have become so acutely aware of our alienation in its different manifestations, we are led to think that the final solution for our experience of loneliness is to be found in human togetherness.

Human togetherness is surely a great value, but it remains superficial unless it unites people who are not in constant flight from the realm of their own solitude. In the words of Kahlil Gibran:

Sing and dance together and be joyous,
but let each one of you be alone,
even as the strings of a lute are alone
though they quiver with the same music.

Henri Nouwen in his 1976 book, *Reaching Out*, comments:

In a time with strong emphasis on interpersonal sensitivity, in which we are encouraged to explore our communicative capacities and experiment with many forms of physical, mental and emotional contact, we are sometimes tempted to believe that our feelings of loneliness and sadness are only a sign of lack of mutual openness. Sometimes this is true and many sensitivity centers make invaluable contributions to the broadening of the range of human interactions. But real openness to each other also means a real closedness, because he who can hold a secret can safely share his knowledge. When we do not protect with great care our inner mystery, we will never be able to form community. It is this inner mystery that attracts us to each other and allows us to establish friendship and develop lasting relationships of love. (H. Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, London, 1976, p. 32.)

Besides, we should never forget that religious communities are communities of *faith* and not just groups of people who are in search

'Solitude, as in any other human situation, is an ambiguous reality.'

of a cozy and sheltered place to live.

Without the solitude of heart, our relationships with others easily become needy and greedy, dependent and sentimental, exploitative and parasitic, because without such solitude we cannot experience the others as different from ourselves but only as people who can be used for the fulfillment of our own, often hidden needs.

Dr. J.H. Van den Berg, psychiatrist, warns against the trend to consider *aloneness* as an aberration, as something that should be fought with all possible means:

The imposed togetherness makes suspect any individual who appears to be able to be alone and that without being lonely. He is accused of atavism. It is openly said that the wish to be alone always means flight and should therefore be blamed. Whereas it is a matter of experience that the best, the newest idea, as also the best, the most daring and lasting action is born in solitude . . . We seem to go on talking because we fear solitude. But whoever speaks out of fear, sooner or later will speak on nothing at all. (*Wat is Psychotherapie*, Nijkerk, 1970, p. 40-41.)

That solitude as such is not opposed to community, but on the contrary is one of its fundamental demands, is a theme that often recurs in the writings of Thomas Merton. On January 12, 1950, he wrote in his diary:

It is in deep solitude that I find the gentleness with which I can truly love my brothers. The more solitary I am, the more affection I have for them. It is pure affection, and filled with reverence for the solitude of others. (*The Sign of Jonas*, London, 1953, p. 261.)

Solitude as such is not opposed to involvement either. The same Thomas Merton wrote after a short visit to Louisville where he had

watched people in a busy shopping district:

. . . though out of the world we (monks) are in the same world as everybody else, the world of the bomb, the world of race hatred, the world of technology, the world of mass media, big business, revolution, and all the rest. We take a different attitude to all these things, for we belong to God. Yet so does everybody else belong to God . . . This sense of liberation from an illusory difference was such a relief and such a joy to me that I almost laughed out loud. And I suppose my happiness could have taken form in these words: "Thank God, thank God that I *am* like other men, that I am only a man among others" . . . I have the immense joy of being *man*, a member of a race in which God became incarnate. As if the sorrows and stupidities of the human condition could overwhelm me, now I realize what we all are. This changes nothing in the sense and value of my solitude, for it is in fact the function of solitude to make one realize such things with a clarity that would be impossible to anyone completely immersed in the other cares, the other illusions, and all the automatisms of a tightly collective existence. My solitude, however, is not my own, for I see how much it belongs to them — and that I have a responsibility for it in their regard, not just my own. It is because I am one with them that I owe it to them to be alone, and when I am alone they are not "they" but my own self. There are no strangers!" (*Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*, London, 1968, p. 141-142.)

In all areas of life, particularly also in spiritual life, we should again discover and value the inevitable reality of *tension*. Any easy and one-way solution bypasses the richness and the complexity of human existence.

People frequently talk about tension nowadays in the same manner in which piously helpful people once used to talk about sex. You will remember the sort of thing — the mastery of sex, living with sex, and so on, as if sex were a dangerous enemy which some brute or blackguard had inflicted upon the human race, instead

of being one of the main sources of human vitality and joy. Tension is now given the same bād name as sex once was. It has to be endured, coped with, lived with, as if it were a misfortune. I am not denying that people can be, and sometimes are, torn apart by internal conflicts which are destructive. But I believe that, in general, people are caught up in destructive conflicts because they have failed to recognize those internal conflicts which are necessary, healthy and creative.

Tension, in other words, is the price of life, a price to which every newborn infant bears its unconscious but by no means silent witness. It is when we refuse to recognize and welcome tensions which are life-giving that we fall a prey to tensions which are death dealing. (H.A. Williams, *Tensions: Necessary Conflicts in Life and Love*, London, 1976, p. 12-13.)

So we are challenged to live the tension between solitude and community. Solitude is not a private space over against the public space of community, nor is it merely a healing space in which we restore ourselves for community life. Solitude and community belong together; each requires the other as do the center and circumference of a circle.

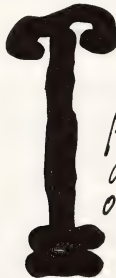
Solitude is essential to community life because in solitude we grow closer to each other. When we pray alone, study, read, write or simply spend quiet time away from the places where we interact with each other directly, we are in fact participating fully in the growth of community.

It is fallacy to think that we grow closer to each other only when we talk, play or work together. Much growth certainly occurs in such human interactions, but much growth can also take place when we enter into solitude. There we can recognize a bond with each other that does not depend on words, gestures or actions and that is deeper and stronger than our own efforts can create. If we base our life together on our physical proximity, on our ability to spend time together, speak with each other, eat together and worship together, community life soon will become tiring and demanding. Only when all these activities are experienced and lived as an

expression of a deeper unity can they remain free and open.

Solitude is indeed essential to genuine community. There we grow closer to each other because there we can encounter the source of our unity. One way to express this is to say that in solitude we are given the awareness of a unity that is prior to all unifying actions. It is the place where we come to realize that we were together before we came together and that community life is not a creation of human will but an obedient response to the reality of our being united. Every time we affirm that solitude belongs to the essence of life together, we express our faith in a love which transcends our interpersonal communication and proclaim that we love each other because we have first been loved (1 John 4:19).

Solitude is the ongoing return to this sustaining love from which the community draws its strength. In the actual life of the community, this means that it cannot be left to individual members to decide upon and deal with solitude. A religious community is supposed to be more than just a bunch of people joyfully living together. Solitude is so central to life together that a religious community is responsible for structuring it in such a way that it ceases to be simply a day to day decision of the individual and becomes instead part of the daily rhythm of life together. Should not time for silence, individual study, personal prayer and meditation be of as much importance to a community as eating together, working and worshipping together? (Cf. H. Nouwen, "Solitude and Community," in *Worship*, 1978, p. 14-23).

 After all, a house is stronger when the pillars on which it rests do not depend on each other but have their own separate foundations.

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REV. PAUL J. WADELL, C.P.

A Ride on the F Train: The Cross, Community Life, and the Kindness of Strangers

Introduction

At the beginning of my introductory course in moral theology, I tell the students I am going to share with them my most memorable, formative moral experience. It is not what they suspect.

It happened not in a moment of great decision, but on the F Train, the subway which runs between Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens. In the summer of 1976 I was working in a CPE program at The Methodist Hospital in Brooklyn. Every Friday afternoon I would ride the F Train into Manhattan to spend the weekend with my brother-in-law's family. Most of the time I would ride the train like a native New Yorker, head down, not eyeing anyone, lost in the solitude of my thoughts. There we were at the height of the afternoon rush hour on a hot summer day, crushed between bodies of all shapes and sizes, squeezed between people we had never seen before, being rocked and jostled as we made our way into Manhattan and beyond.

But one Friday it was different: I opened my eyes. I began to look around the car, to see those who were with me, and to wonder

about them. Rocking back and forth on that train, it occurred to me that all these people were very different from me, and yet we were one. Looking around the train that day I could see people of diverse nationalities, of many races, of multiple religions, but despite that — maybe even because of it — I felt a luring intimacy with them, a surprising kind of kinship. I thought of what they might be like, of who might love them. I wondered about their problems and struggles, whether they were happy in their lives or whether they were nursing some secret sorrow. To me it was an awakening, one of those moments that turn your life around so that you are never quite the same. The world began to look different that day. I felt an indebtedness to people I had never seen. I sensed how much I depended on the kindness of those I would never come to know. I was convinced it was good to be with them even if I never spoke a word. And I wanted to love them even if I would never know them, because to love them was to realize I could not be myself without them. Something inside broke down that day, a clenched muscle finally relaxed: I had found community with strangers.

As simple and prosaic as this experience might sound, just such a moment of coming to see how different from one another we all are, yet how much we depend on one another, is the beginning of the moral life. Morality begins not in some momentous decision, not in the problems with which we sometimes struggle, but in just such an experience of the profound and liberating differences of others. A moral experience is anything which enables us to appreciate what is not ourselves. It is an experience which enlarges our horizons, which opens up our world, which brings us life through communion, however momentary, with another. Riding the F Train on a Friday afternoon is a momentous moral experience because through it we learn that the moral life begins in the discovery that something other than ourself is real. Morality is an implication of otherness, and this means we can only be moral if we are willing to make our world larger through kinship with others.

That something other than ourself is real is an obvious truth, but it is painfully difficult to live. As soon as we acknowledge this we are no longer the center of our world. Whether the other is God, a person, or the world about us, the presence of another changes our perspective; one world collapses, another world begins to be



shaped. Otherness repositions us. It makes us think twice about some of our ideas, it demands that we listen, sometimes it even asks that we confess we were wrong. It is impossible to make the discovery of otherness without also feeling a certain loss of self. From that moment on our life is different, the world does not look the same.

Morality commences in a kind of de-centering. Despite how difficult this may be, not to let it happen is a kind of moral suicide because those who are other than we are the key to our moral deliverance. Moral deliverance lies not in our hands, but in the hands of another, ultimately, to be sure, in the hands of God, but proximately in the hands of all those who come our way. And what can make this so disenchanting is that often the ones who can do most for us — the ones who can explode our world and open it to love — are the very ones most different from ourselves. All of us can make our own Blanche DuBois' words in Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*: "Whoever you are — I have always depended on the kindness of strangers."¹ So much of who we are is the work of strangers we have risked to see as friends. In his book, *A Peaceable Kingdom*,² Stanley Hauerwas argues that our most abiding moral task is to learn to welcome the stranger, for indeed it is in that guise that all people, even our friends, first come to us.

What is striking about the moral life is not only that morality is friendship, but that all our friends were once our strangers. What is remarkable about friends is what a risk it is to let a stranger become one. Why do we let that happen? Why do we take the risk? Because intuitively we know that in order to have a life we have to get outside ourselves. No matter how many times we may have been hurt or betrayed by others, we take a chance in letting strangers become

our friends because we know that the possibility of having a self hinges on entering the world of another through love.

This is not the way we usually think about the moral life, but we may be living it more than we suspect; indeed, it captures well what we pledge Passionist community life to be. In the remainder of this essay we will explore first how this model reshapes our understanding of the moral life; secondly, how our community life can and should be a paradigm of welcoming the stranger as a gift; and thirdly, how this understanding of community fashions our approach to ministry.

Being Confronted with the Presence of Another

In his book *Gift and Call*,³ Enda McDonagh tries to uncover our basic moral experience. He says it is what happens to us when we are in the presence of another. It is a moral experience because their presence demands our attention, it calls for a response from us. To ignore them is not only to misunderstand the experience, but to violate it. Their presence impinges on us as a call to come out of ourself in recognition and response. We feel their presence, it acts on us, it calls us to attention so that not only should we respond, but a refusal to respond is to fail to grasp the shape of the experience itself. As McDonagh sees it, there is something unconditional about this call. We experience the presence of the other person as exercising an inviolable power over us. It is precisely their presence that makes the experience what it is, that shapes it into an invitation demanding from us a response. For McDonagh, all moral experience has this character of invitation and response. Morality is the ongoing encounters we have with others whose presence, whose very being, is an invitation to us to come out of ourself in response. Our most basic moral experience is being called to attention by another. There is no option here, it is a duty, it is our most basic moral obligation. To recognize others or to ignore them are not equal alternatives; indeed, to fail to heed the claim their presence has upon us constitutes the most basic and pernicious immorality because unless we acknowledge their presence in recognition, respect, and response we cannot possibly be moral at all.

What impresses us most about those who stand before us is sim

ply that they are not who we are, they are clearly and intriguingly other. It is their irreducible otherness that catches our attention. It means they have a meaning and value completely independent of ourselves. It means we cannot understand them by trying to possess them, we can only understand them when we are willing to respect their otherness. To respect them is not to try to make them like ourself, but to practice the love that lets their otherness be.

Morality is an implication of otherness, and this means we can only be moral if we are willing to make our world larger through kinship with others...

Such love is rare. We are fond of thinking that when all is said and done everyone, much to his or her advantage, is more or less like ourself. That is often how we try to understand people; rather than appreciating their differences, we try to discount them, but as soon as we do that we see others not as they truly are, but as we like or need them to be. It is manipulation disguised as love. As Stanley Hauerwas points out in *Vision and Virtue*, "Most of our loving is more an assertion of self than a recognition of the other. We seldom love the other as he is; rather we love the other by imposing upon him our own preconceived image of who he is . . . We therefore love the other only as we make him an aspect of our plan; we assume this assures his eternity (and ours)."⁴ Genuine love does not try to reduce otherness, it cherishes it. It is the love practiced by parents who realize children are made not in their image but in God's. It is the love of friends who genuinely wish what is best for us and rejoice when our life can be shared with others. Following Simone Weil and Iris Murdoch, Hauerwas calls such love "the nonviolent apprehension of differences."⁵ It is the love that makes community possible.

All this suggests something about the shape of a genuinely moral act. Moral response is other-directed. It takes shape by moving

out of ourself toward another. There is an inherent dynamism to moral experience that can best be expressed in this movement from isolation to communion. The ongoing challenge of the moral life is to move from self-absorption to love; better put, to move from the hopelessness of self-centeredness to communion with God and others. We are not to be self-absorbed, we are to be God-absorbed, we are to seek intimacy with God and others through the lifelong asceticism of genuine love. This is not an easy task, but it is our moral task, this never ending challenge to break free of ourself in love so that we can be more than ourself in another. Self-centeredness is the basic immorality not only because it ignores another, but more pointedly because it brings death to ourself.

All this may be true, but it is hardly easy. We need to move from isolation to love, but our capacity to risk love depends largely on how we see another. How do others look to us? When strangers enter our world, do we see them as gifts or as threats? McDonagh says the challenge is to see the other as a "gift embodying a call," but the tendency is to see them as "a threat provoking fear." We can move out of ourself in love only when we are able to perceive the other person as a gift, as someone potentially enriching for us; however, such vision is not a natural capacity, it is an achievement.

For instance, isn't it true that our first impressions of people are often wrong? Don't we find ourselves having to revise them? They may be wrong because we tend to view those we don't know defensively, we are guarded, apprehensive. Don't we often misread people we do not take the time to know? We can conclude that someone who is unusually quiet and withdrawn is aloof, even arrogant, but perhaps they only need to be coaxed by our love. Or what about prejudice? Is it not true that prejudice, whether it be racial, ethnic, sexual or religious, is a perduring refusal to see certain groups of people quite other than ourselves as gifts instead of threats? There may be no more heinous injustice than prejudice because it absolutely refuses to let one in whom God lives be gift for us. We fear certain groups of people on account of whatever makes them different from us. We see them as threats because we are convinced their otherness will not enrich us. Maybe we fear them because to love them means they might change us. Maybe we fear them because if we love them that threatens our control of our world.

Consider how we sometimes act when someone new joins our community. As much as we say we want vocations, we may not always show the kind of hospitality that really allows someone to become part of our life. Our initial tendency may not be to welcome the gift the new person brings to us, but to receive him only on the condition that he quickly becomes just like us. This is not to say that as a community we do not have a distinctive charism to offer, nor that there is not a tradition new members must learn; however, it is to say that what allows us to have a future is precisely our capacity to welcome new members as a grace, even to the point of letting ourselves be changed by them. To welcome new members is to practice hospitality, and this means we not only welcome them into our world, but also receive their world into our own, embracing it as a way God continues to bring us life.

The same is true in ministry. Can we see those who come to us as gifts instead of threats? Can we receive all as one in whom Christ lives? No matter what our ministry might be, those who come to us are often distressed and discouraged, lonely and without hope. They come to us because they believe from us, if nowhere else, they should be able to receive a word of compassion, a message of love. Often they come to us as people who have seldom, if ever, been perceived as a gift. To be Christ to them is to allow them to be gift for us, to heal them by accepting them, to give them hope by letting them know they are images of God's love, testimonies of grace. This does not mean we approve of everything anyone who comes to us might do, but it does mean we be for them who Christ would be, someone who sees their goodness and respects it, someone who recognizes God in them and calls them to be that. Unless we are able to recognize all those who come to us as gifts, the compassionate love of a crucified God will not be able to work through us. To minister is to see others as God does. If we take up the point of view of God, that is, if we look to the world from the foot of the Cross, we can be gospel for them. Perhaps better than others, a Passionist should learn that God comes to us in many guises. God comes to us in the homosexual who is suffering, in the alcoholic who has no hope, in the lonely one begging to be loved. To minister is to have compassion. That does not mean we fail to guide them, even to suggest changes for their lives, but it does mean we let them know we

see them in their brokenness as gift. To minister as Passionists is to find the presence of God in shattered lives and to offer that to them as gift.

When we do this our lives are enriched as well. Ministry is a promising moral moment because it is to welcome the stranger as gift. Ministry is a moral enterprise because by attending to others the self-imposed and dangerously limiting boundaries of our world break down. There is great insecurity in ministry because we cannot do it well unless we are willing to take chances with others. There is unavoidable vulnerability to ministry, the vulnerability of sharing oneself, the vulnerability of letting another into our life, and the exquisite vulnerability of welcoming Christ in them that they might minister to us. Ministry is morality because it draws us out of ourselves into the Body of Christ. Through ministry we learn that all of us together form one person, the Mystical Body of Christ. This means we need each other's differences. It means if we deny another we really deny something of ourselves. If we are all members one of another, then to persist in seeing someone as threat also means we have not learned how genuinely to love ourselves. Ministry should be a grammar in genuine love because in receiving others as gifts we work the reconciliation that makes community, and hence personhood, possible. To minister is to practice a love that risks otherness, and that is why it is such a supremely moral act. To minister is to practice the moral agency of allowing the gift to triumph over threat; it is to respond in a way that leads to communion and enrichment instead of violence and elimination. Such moral activity is not naturally endowed, it is a virtue, a moral skill honed in us through the asceticism of an abiding intention. That is the intention to welcome those God sends us, and the school for its practice in community life.



*Community Life: A Refusal
To Let The Gift In Others Be Lost*

What has most impressed me about Passionist community life is that we commit ourselves to live, and indeed to prosper, not with those we choose, but with those we have been given. It is culturally rare. Our life together really is a staggering achievement because it is our pledge to entrust ourselves not to those we might prefer, but to all those of such varied backgrounds, of such different dispositions, who have been given to us. It is amazing to consider all the hundreds of Passionists who have walked into and out of our lives, who have made us and changed us, and then to realize we did not choose one of them. They were gifts to us, these strangers who turned up at the door, who sat next to us in classes, who prayed with us in chapel. And that we were able not only to welcome them, but at some point to call them both brother and friend, amply testifies that Passionist community life can and should be the ongoing commitment to let gift triumph over threat. Still, our willingness to receive them and to be changed by them is not so much a sign of our generosity as it is a consequence of what we believe. Community life witnesses that it is truly possible, whatever our differences, for people to live in peace; and yet, that very possibility rests not on our goodness, but on a God whose love could not be destroyed by our determination to make that gift a threat.

The Cross is like a mirror. Viewed one way, it reflects what happens when we receive God's love not as the ultimate gift, but as the ultimate threat. The Cross silences anyone who thinks we are anxious to welcome God into our world. As Herbert McCabe writes, "It is to say that this is the kind of world we have, a crucifying world, a world doomed to reject its own meaning. Insofar as a man calls men to a deeper kind of humanity, insofar as he offers them, not just in theory but in practice, a more human mode of communication, he will be rejected by mankind. The openness of love becomes the vulnerability of the victim. If you love enough you will in the long run be killed."⁶

But the Cross is also like a mirror inasmuch as it reflects God's staggering unwillingness to allow our refusal to prevail. To live in the memory of the Passion is to live with this continually in mind.

It is the memory from which we locate our lives, so much so that Passionist community is our shared commitment to be shaped by the graciousness which redeems, our shared commitment to make of our lives a doxology to the God whose life is stronger than the death we brought to it. Put differently, it is precisely because we understand so well the love of the Cross that we pledge to live in the power of the resurrection. The Cross is a symbol of our refusal of God, but the resurrection is a symbol of a love which overcomes that refusal; more than that, the resurrection means God liberates unto life even where we persist in making choices of death. In this sense, to do our lives in the memory of the Passion is simultaneously to live from the power of the resurrection. Memory of the Passion and resurrection ethics are inseparable, for it is precisely the power of God's crucified love that enables us to live now in terms of the world to come. The Paschal Mystery is no vestige of the past; it is the ever vibrant revolutionary love which makes Kingdom possibilities real.

*'As Passionists we practice
a special kind of friendship.'*

Passionist community life is an attempt to mediate one of those possibilities now. To live in peace with those we have been given is no mean achievement. It is an eschatological possibility that Passionists strive to make present now. What is the Kingdom possibility community life tries to achieve? More than anything, it is to be a reconciling, healing community that strives for unity instead of division, that seeks a coming together of what so often is torn apart. If we live in a world in which enmity so often prevails, community life witnesses that unity can be had. If we live in a world where hatred and dissension and violence seem so overwhelming, community says the real power is always with love. If the experience of our world tells us some divisions are so deep they can only be final, community is a prophecy to the power in forgiveness. As we say in #26 of our Constitutions, "The Christian community is founded on the love of Christ, who by His Cross 'tore down the wall of separation' and

made all one people."

We insist on living with one another as gifts because anything else betrays the memory which enables us to live in hope at all. Passionist community is a pledge to be formed by and continue the healing, reconciling love of the Cross. It is the pledge to be the people whose lives tell the story of the God whose love makes gifts of us all. As Passionists, our life together should eloquently demonstrate that since Christ lives deeply in each of us, the very differences which might appear as threatening we see as the means by which we are most blessed. It is exactly our confidence in the story of a crucified and risen love that shapes and empowers our lives. To be community is to have confidence in a perfect love that casts out fear, a perfect love that enables us, despite our failures, to be a people who believe God is liberated in each of us when we receive one another as gift.

To live not with those we choose, but with those we have been given is a counter-cultural pledge because it is an eschatological possibility. It does not take us out of the world, but it brings God and God's Kingdom more fully into our midst. As #17 in our Constitutions says, "Forming communities with brethren not chosen by us, but given to us by Christ, we desire to show the profound meaning of human love and its ultimate purpose, 'that God may be all in all.'" That is the hope of the Kingdom to come, and it is a hope realized now when we practice the reconciling love of God. At its best, Passionist community life witnesses that such a hope is not far-fetched. Communion with others is within reach if, like the God we are called to imitate, we refuse to let the gift in one another be lost.

'What is striking about the moral life is not only that morality is friendship. but that all our friends were once our strangers...'

It is such a pledge that makes community possible, and to the degree that we achieve this in our communities we are able to share it in our ministries. Perhaps the most precious charism we bring to ministry is our conviction that all people are gifts, not threats. Perhaps the power of our ministry is letting them see this, especially those who no longer believe they can be gift at all.

Ministry: Being On The Lookout For The Seldom Seen

The moral life is friendship, friendship with God and with others. Why such a strange claim is true should now be clear. The moral life is friendship first because so much of who we are is the work of our friends. To understand this all we need do is imagine how different we would be if suddenly our life were without certain people. To lose a friend is to lose a part of ourself; if our friends change, we change too. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, morality is friendship because it is impossible to be a self, to have a moral history, without the other whose attentiveness not only enables us to be, but also brings us to life and allows us to flourish. So much of who we are is the handiwork of our friends, the artistry of their charity. Friends not only see possibilities for us that we cannot even imagine, they also bring us to life by drawing out of us gifts we cannot enliven on our own. To speak of the moral life as friendship is to see that it is essentially the activity in which the love of another in recognizing and respecting us draws us to life.

But if this is true, loneliness is a serious moral problem. Those who feel they have no friends, those continually overlooked and forgotten, suffer severely because bereft of the love of another, they are also bereft of a self. We can take seriously the plea that some people are dying for attention, or from lack of it. Some people are dying for a moment of recognition, a gaze of love, a look of acceptance. They are crying out for a little attention, at least enough that would make them feel they had a self at all. As Muriel says in a plaintive, haunting passage from Mary Gordon's novel, *The Company of Women*, "I wait for a face to meet my face; I wait for the singular gaze, the gaze of permanent choosing, the glance of absolute preferment. This I have always waited for and never found, have hungered for and never tasted . . . I wait here to be looked upon

with favor, to be chosen above others, knowing I will die the first beloved of no living soul.”

*When others enter our world,
do we see them as gifts or
as threats?*

This is where Passionists, because of the story we promise to live, continue, and bring home to the world, can be so helpful in our ministries. In community life we endeavor to live so that the gift of no one is lost. Similarly, in our ministries we are on the lookout for those who feel they are no gift at all. After all, what else did the crucified Lord do through his Passion than make us see the gift that we are in the eyes of God? If we are men formed by the memory of that story, if we are men who have experienced deeply that love ourselves, then that is the gospel message, the keenly felt redemptive message, that we offer in ministry to those who feel there is no grace in them at all. As Passionists we practice a special kind of friendship. We devote ourselves to befriending the forsaken, to spotting the overlooked, to noticing the always forgotten. We know many come to us in our ministry looking for attention, and that is exactly what we have to offer them, not a vacuous, cheap attention, but the loving gaze of a God committed to the gift that they are. People come to us looking for attention because they know the special kind of attention Passionists have to give is an attention which steadfastly declares them graced and good.

Still, perhaps the greatest ministry we can offer is not so much our attentiveness to them, but allowing them the dignity of being attentive to us. As Passionists, we do more than see these others as gifts; we also are willing to see their recognition of us as gift. To minister is not only to offer them something, it is to avail ourselves to them, to be receptive to the gift of themselves. There is no better way to affirm the goodness of another than to be hospitable to the gift of their self. In this way we discover not only that our ministry liberates them, but that in their attentiveness to us — by our will-

ingness to receive the kindness of these strangers — they become powerful liberators too. The greatest ministry we can offer those who “count for nothing” is to affirm their giftedness by being vulnerable to the attention they offer. Thus, albeit unexpectedly, we bring to life the secret of redemption: We are most blessed not when we change the world of others by making their life like our own, but when we let ourselves be changed by receiving their world, so different from our own, as good.

And so whether on a mission, in a parish, at home, or even on the F Train we learn again what we have secretly always known: So much of our life depends on the kindness of strangers we have chanced to see as friends.

¹ Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*. New York: New Directions Books, 1980, sc. 11.

² Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983, esp. pp. 44-46.

³ Enda McDonagh, *Gift and Call*. St. Meinrad, Indiana: Abbey Press, 1975. McDonagh's book will be relied on throughout this first section, esp. pp. 2-95.

⁴ Stanley Hauerwas, *Vision and Virtue*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974, p. 33.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁶ Herbert McCabe, *What Is Ethics All About?* Washington: Corpus Books, 1969, pp. 132-133.

⁷ Mary Gordon, *The Company of Women*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1980, p. 275.

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Naked Healers

I watched the final television episode of *Holocaust* with a group of young resident doctors, many of them Jewish.

Hardly a word was spoken by anyone, even during the commercials.

The next evening, I happened to be alone with a physician friend in the Emergency Department. I asked Mark if he had seen the conclusion of *Holocaust* the previous night.

Mark kept his head down, staring at a patient's chart. "I was not able to watch it. I found it too upsetting emotionally."

Because of our friendship I felt I could ask Mark a further question. "Was it a specific scene that upset you?"

Mark raised his head and looked at me in a strange way. He spoke his words slowly. "I was born in Mauthausen prison camp three weeks before VE Day."

I was stunned. I had not known this. I was unable to respond.

Mark sensed my awkward, embarrassed silence. "My mother should have been gassed . . . pregnant Jewish women were of no use . . . except as interpreters . . . my mother speaks five languages."

Just then a nurse came beside the desk and distracted Mark with a question. I breathed relief. I felt like I had been caught trespassing.

* * * * *



Evening ministry in the Emergency Department offers me a glimpse of doctors that others rarely get. I see physicians in critical, life-threatening situations: when they are agonizing over a patient; when they must make a decision right now; when they have no time to consult their peers; when their inner human nakedness is most apparent.

MEMORY

PSALM 146

Praise the Lord!
Praise the Lord, my soul!
I will praise him as long as I live;
I will sing to my God all my life.

It's half past twelve at night
Telemetry room half dark
A doctor and I, alone
His eyelids sag like bags
His voice is rough as a rasp

Don't put your trust in human leaders;
no human being can save you.
When they die, they return to the dust;
on that day all their plans come to an end.

"So, what's it all about?
"The endless rat race hours!
"And talk emotional stress!
"These nights without my sleep!
"Away from Beth and the kids!"

Happy is the man who has the God of Jacob to help him
and who depends on the Lord his God,
the Creator of heaven, earth, and sea,
and all that is in them.

He's always been rather remote
Until this midnight fluke
Some people defrost at night
He drags the butt of his Kent
And stares above at the wall

He always keeps his promises;
he judges in favor of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.
The Lord lifts those who have fallen;
he loves his righteous people.

His words are for himself
But totally conscious of me
"And always, a memory flash
"Of years ago, in O.R.
"Was late one afternoon"

The Lord sets prisoners free
and gives sight to the blind.
He protects the strangers to the blind.
He protects the strangers who live in our land;
he helps widows and orphans,
but takes the wicked to their ruin.

"I helped a family friend
"Regain his damaged sight"
Now, eye to eye with me
"And ever since that day
"I've never had a doubt"

The Lord is king forever.
Your God, O Zion, will reign forever!
Praise the Lord!

FRIEND

JOHN 11

A man named Lazarus, who lived in Bethany, became sick. Bethany was the town where Mary and her sister Martha lived. (This Mary was the one who poured the perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was sick.) The sisters sent Jesus a message: "Lord, your dear friend is sick."

When Jesus heard it, he said, "The final result of this sickness will not be the death of Lazarus; this has happened in order to bring glory to God, and it will be the means by which the Son of God will receive glory."

A quick debrief
From nurse in charge
"On Bed Eleven
"A Mister Nellon

"Congestive heart
"His family asked
"A Catholic priest
"He's going fast"

I finger the oils
Draw back the curtain
And offer prayers
Sense no response

*"Our friend Lazarus has
fallen asleep, but I will go to
wake him up."*

Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Yet, when he received the news that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was for

two more days. Then he said to the disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

"Teacher," the disciples answered, "just a short time ago the people there wanted to stone you; and are you planning to go back?"

Jesus said, "A day has twelve hours, doesn't it? So, whoever walks in broad daylight does not stumble, for he sees the light of this world. But if he walks during the night he stumbles, because he has no light."

Then seek out wife
In Waiting Room
There staring in space
A friend of mine

"So! Doctor Zaddik!
"What brings you here?
"It's almost twelve!"
His eyes refocus

"Oh! Father Frank!"
He drops his head
Both fists are jabbed
Between his knees

Jesus said this and added, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I will go and wake him up."

The disciples answered, "If he is asleep, Lord, he will get well."

Jesus meant that Lazarus had died, but they thought he meant natural sleep. So Jesus told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, but for your sake I am glad that I was not with him, so that you will believe. Let us go to him."

Thomas (called the Twin) said to his fellow disciples, "Let us go along with the Teacher, so that we may die with him!"

"It's Gary Nellan!
"Since grammar school
"My closest friend!"
He hesitates . . .

"Now Gary's dying!
"And me a doc!"
His voice goes flat
"No help at all!"

His eyes meet mine
I shake my head
"Your friend is dead"
Almost relief . . .

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had been buried four days before. Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Judeans had come to see Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother's death.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed in the house. Martha said to Jesus, "If you had been here, Lord, my brother would not have died! But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask him for."

He nods towards door
"Could you tell Ruth?
"I doubt I can"
I squeeze his arm

Then pass beyond
To Family Room
A mother and son
Their arms entwined

Pure naked fear
All hope has fled
I pray "Lord, help!"
My work begins

"Your brother will rise to life," Jesus told Martha.

"I know," she replied, "that he will rise to life on the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and

believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord!" Martha answered. "I do believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who was to come into the world."

GULP!

PSALM 126

When the Lord delivered Zion from bondage,
it seemed like a dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
on our lips there were songs.

The heathen themselves said:

"What marvels the Lord worked for them!"

What marvels the Lord worked for us!

We were glad indeed!

Len's ortho gown is caked and smeared

With plaster globs and specks of blood

"No, Padre, this place never quits"

The x-ray film absorbs his eyes

"Been on my feet for twenty hours

"I must get home tonight or else . . ."

His eyelids droop from lack of sleep

"This weekend at a crack is shlock!"

Deliver us, O Lord, from our bondage
as streams in dry land.

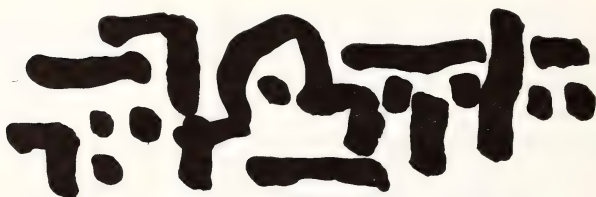
Those who are sowing in tears
will sing when they reap.

They go out, they go out, full of tears,
carrying seed for the sowing.

They come back, they come back, full of song,
carrying their sheaves.

Just then, a lab tech passes by
She could have modeled anywhere
Len eyes her swaying hips and sighs
A long and wistful purr: "mmmmMMMM!"

I shake my head from side to side
"Why not?" his eyebrows mount and ask
I wink a smile: "Too tall for me!"
Len laughs a hearty laugh, his first



PSALM 127

If the Lord does not build the house,
in vain do its builders labor.
If the Lord does not watch over the city,
in vain does the watchman keep vigil.

In vain is your earlier rising,
your going later to rest,
you who toil for the bread you eat;
when he pours gifts on his beloved while they slumber.

"Yeah, Frank, you know," he's serious now
"I gulp my food! I gulp my drink!
"I gulp my sleep!" A little pause
"And hell! I even gulp my sex!"

He slaps me with his patient's chart
"I think I should've been a priest!"
Len starts away . . . I can't resist
One thrust, my coup de grace: "Shalom!"

Truly sons are a gift from the Lord,
a blessing, the fruit of the womb.
Indeed the sons of youth
are like arrows in the hand of a warrior.

O the happiness of the man
who has filled his quiver with these arrows!
He will have no cause for shame
when he disputes with his foes in the gateways.

SHALOM

Rev. Francis Keenan, C.P. has been emergency room chaplain at Lutheran General Hospital in Des Plaines, Illinois, since 1974. He resides at Immaculate Conception Retreat in Chicago.

FATHER FIDELIS KENT STONE
(of the Cross)

Chapter Nine

The Passionists in the United States of America grew rapidly during the final decades of the nineteenth century. By the time the century ended there were Passionist monasteries: from Union City (New Jersey) to southeast Kansas (St. Paul), and from Dunkirk (New York) to Baltimore (Maryland). There were also four communities in the cities of Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Louisville and St. Louis. In each city there was also a parish served by Passionists.

Vocations came rather easily, partly because the Passionists quickly adapted to the customs and practices of the growing Catholic Church in America. In 1852 when the founders came from Italy there were few Italian immigrants to this country. Most of the immigrants were coming from Ireland and Germany. These were the people who needed the services of the Passionists. From them came the first vocations. The Italian founders quickly adapted to the American way of life as lived by the Irish and German immigrants.

In a short time the young Americans joining the community felt quite welcomed and at home. As early as 1875 Father Charles Lange was elected to the Provincial Council. In 1887 Father Benedict Murnane was chosen as the first non-Italian Provincial. At his untimely death Father Thomas O'Connor succeeded him. He became the first American on the General Council in Rome.

There were during these first years many zealous and dedicated American Passionists. One of the most outstanding was Father Fidelis of the Cross (James Kent Stone). His story becomes closely intertwined with Passionist history for more than four decades.

James Kent Stone was born on Tremont Place, Boston, on November 10, 1840, of Dr. John Seely Stone, an Episcopalian priest, and Mary Kent, daughter of the jurist, James Kent. He entered Harvard in 1856, and graduated in the Class of '61, with Oliver Wendell Holmes. For a year he served in the Union Army, fighting an Antietam in 1862.



On resigning from the army he married Cornelia Fay, was ordained an Episcopal priest and became president of Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. Later he was appointed president of Hobart College, Geneva, New York. Three daughters were born, but shortly after the birth of the third child, Cornelia died, in 1868.

When Pope Pius IX convoked the First Vatican Council he invited non-Catholics to consider the claims of the Roman Catholic Church. The widowed president of Hobart College heeded this invitation, only to find his world shaken. He resigned his office, and on December 8, 1869, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, was received into the Church. He wrote of his crisis in "The Invitation Heeded."

To prepare for his reception into the Church he made a retreat at St. Michael's monastery in Union City. He was at once attracted to the life and the work of the Passionists. He resolved, even before the retreat was over, to become a Passionist as soon as he was freed from family obligations.

In the meantime Kent Stone applied to Father Isaac Hecker for admission into the new community of the Paulists. He was ordained as a Paulist priest on December 21, 1872.

But what about his children! He visited the saintly foundress of the Mercy Sisters, Mother Frances Warde, at Mount St. Mary's Academy, Manchester, New Hampshire. Mother Frances recognized the greatness of the young convert and father. She agreed to care

for his children. This enabled him to become a Paulist, but he was not "freed enough" to join the Passionists.

At this time, almost providentially he met the Michael O'Connors. This couple agreed to adopt the two children (one child had died) and to take them with them to San Francisco where they were moving. There was, however, one stipulation: Father Stone must surrender all parental rights.

He agreed. One night he took all mementos of his wife and children, even the wedding rings, and dropped them into the Hudson River at the foot of Fifty-ninth Street. Now he was free to board the train for the Passionist novitiate in Pittsburgh.

He was vested as a Passionist on August 10, 1876, and took his vows one year later. His novice master was Father Amadeo Garibaldi, one of the band who went with Father Peter Maganotti to Virginia City. Fidelis later described Amadeus as "a real master in Israel, the most thorough-going old 13th century religious I ever knew" (Smith 271).

After his profession he prepared for missionary work as a Passionist. He was very successful as a Passionist Missionary. He also became a sought-after preacher. He was asked to deliver the sermon at the solemn Requiem Mass for Pope Pius IX at Baltimore on February 16, 1878. Later he preached at the inauguration of the Catholic University in Washington.

In 1894 Father Fidelis took a prominent part in the first Passionist Missionary Congress held at Pittsburgh, January 25-February 6. Thirty-two missionaries assembled together with the Provincial, Father John Baptist Baudinelli. Father Fidelis gave a most moving lecture on the role of the Passionist preaching. "The Passion and Death of our Saviour are God's most impressive motive for conquering human hearts . . . accepting the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's



guiding presence in the Church, can we doubt that the approval of our Congregation and of its specific work, means that we are to go about the world to force men to realize . . . that because God so loves them, they should love Him, serve and obey Him."

Father Fidelis was called to serve in Rome and elsewhere. He accepted these calls in a spirit of humble obedience. While he was in Rome a convert friend, Mr. Henry S. Richards, had written to him about "the great work that lies before you and my desire to hear the trumpet sounding *in our midst again*." Fidelis answered: "Bless you, it was only a penny whistle at best & it's cracked now(!) . . . I know the fields are white in America, but others must be the reapers, the great reapers . . . how little desire I have to 'sound the trumpet' in the centre of Puritanism" (Smith, p. 270, May 16, 1880).

In 1880 he volunteered to serve in South America, where a problem was developing. Several Irish Passionists had gone to Argentina to work among the Irish immigrants to that country. One of them, Father Martin Byrne, saw the needs of the settlers and began to raise money for them. His plans included schools, hospitals, and orphanages.

Father Bernard Mary Silvestrelli, the General, was concerned about Martin's activities. In 1881 he sent several Americans and Italians there, among them Father Fidelis. Part of the problem was that the Irish Passionists feared that the order in Argentina would become Italianized, while the Irish settlers felt their money would be used for ministries to non-Irish. Father Bernard Silvestrelli, on the other hand, thought the missionaries were engaging in apostolates foreign to the Passionist spirit.

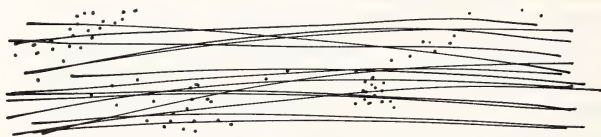
Father Fidelis was able to win the people to support the Passionists in building a beautiful church and monastery in Buenos Aires and in preaching missions to the settlers on the ranches. He succeeded in serving the Irish while preserving the traditions of the Congregation. Other American Passionists joined him in Argentina. Many continued on even when the Argentine Province was established.

There were also years when he returned to the United States. He participated at the provincial chapter of 1896. In the Acts of this chapter we read: "Never before has the chapter assembled under better auspices and midst more sanguine expectations than in the present instance. The past three years have been remarkable for the

peace of the communities; the prosperity of the different retreats; the number and extent of our ministerial labors; the acquisition of many and promising subjects, and the addition of a new retreat."

Three years later the chapter secretary would note that there was "a gradual moral and religious retrogression in our age." Of course, what had happened was the publication of "Testem Benevolentiae" earlier that year, with its condemnation of "Americanism!"

Interestingly, he was living in Rome as General Consultor during the years of the so-called "Americanist" crisis. Father Felix Ward writes: "... when the honor of the Church in America was attacked under the specious charge of 'Americanism' he did fine work in dispelling misconceptions. This led Cardinal Gibbons to say: 'Father Fidelis owes it to himself and the truth to be on the right side, and I take him into my heart for it.' (The Passionists, p. 212)"



From 1902 to 1905 Father Fidelis was Novice Master at Pittsburgh. As a former General Consultor he was selected by the General to preside at the Provincial Chapter of 1905. Father Fidelis took advantage of his position to propose quite strongly that the time had come to form two Provinces of the Passionists in the United States. The newer Province would consist of the monasteries in Ohio and westward, with headquarters in St. Louis. Not all the religious agreed that this was the opportune time to divide the Province. Father Fidelis insisted and finally the Chapter not only approved the division of the Province but also elected him as Provincial.

The Superiors of the old and province-to-be assembled in the new Sacred Heart Retreat in Louisville, for what Father Felix Ward nostalgically called the "last assemblage of east and west as one Province." On Monday morning, July 30, 1906, Father Fidelis Kent Stone read the decree of Rome creating the new Province of Holy Cross. One can almost hear the sonorous Latin of the papal document flowing from the eloquent tongue of the Harvard graduate.

For Father Charles Lang, the Provincial of the new Province, the solemnity of the occasion very soon was more readily expressed by the words of the 1908 Provincial Chapter: "This new Province has felt the 'Touch of the Cross'. If this Province is to live out its name, the Cross must follow its progress."

In 1911 Father Fidelis was chosen to become the Provincial of the new Argentine Province. He also became involved in establishing the Congregation in Chile and eventually in Brazil. He loved the years that he spent in South America.

Before leaving he wrote from Argentina to a friend: "Had I the time and the strength . . . I would desire to say something for the sake of my fellow-countrymen in the North — something positive and plain, *concerning the true state of Catholicity in the beautiful but little known Southern continent of America*. The years which I have here have left me edified and humbled. There are scandals, of course there are, if we look for them. But there have been saints and martyrs here of whom the world knows nothing . . . The history of the Catholic Church in South America has never been written, may never be written, but it would be a great work; a story of devotion, of abnegation, of faith, both fascinating and true" (Awakening, p. 328-329). He left his heart there as he finally sailed away in 1915.

As an old man of seventy-six years, unable to enter Mexico, he stopped at Corpus Christi, Texas, to preach the Lenten course for Bishop Paul Nussbaum, C.P. Father Paul Nussbaum was chosen to become the first Bishop of Corpus Christi. Quite a few Passionists were working in this new "mission" diocese, among the Blacks, the Hispanics, and the whites. For thirteen years Bishop Paul struggled to lay the foundations for the Church in southeast Texas. He resigned in 1920, to become three years later the Bishop of Marquette, Michigan. Bishop Nussbaum was the first American Passionist to become a Bishop.

Father Fidelis saw the need in Texas and felt "an interior call" to join Father Mark Moeslein, C.P., at Holy Cross Church among the Blacks. He remained there for two years and helped build the church and school. This was his final active ministry. The president of Kenyon College teaching simple catechism to children in Corpus Christi!





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P. Doyle



The Passionist

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PREFACE

On September 25, 1988, Rev. Donald Senior, C.P. was installed as the fourth president of the Catholic Theological Union at Chicago. We are pleased to be able to present in this issue his inaugural address, "The City as Sacred Place." As he reflects on the twenty years of growth and development of this school of ministry, Fr. Senior provides us with a perceptive analysis of the city as the place where God is discovered and served.

Retreats for Religious Women hold a significant place in our Passionist ministry. Like many of our other ministries, this one has changed dramatically in the last twenty-five years. So, we asked Sister Carolyn Osiek, R.S.C.J., Associate Professor of Sacred Scripture at Catholic Theological Union at Chicago, to offer some reflections on issues we should consider as we approach this important work. In her article "Giving Sisters' Retreats, or: Damned If You Do and Damned If You Don't," she gives sound and practical advice to retreat masters for Religious Women.

Concelebration is the topic of the next article. In his article, "Concelebration: Boon or Bane," Rev. John O'Brien, C.P. offers his reflection on some of the contemporary issues that surround concelebration. He discusses the values which underlie eucharistic worship and concludes that the context of the worshipping community is of prime importance in determining the appropriateness of concelebration.

In "Final Nakedness" Fr. Francis Keenan, C.P. concludes his prayerful reflection on suffering as revealed in his work as chaplain in the emergency room at Lutheran General Hospital. He beautifully illustrates that it is in his encounters with the sick and dying that the power of redemption is most clearly revealed to him.

On October 17, 1988 Charles Houban of Dublin was beautified. We conclude this issue with the story of Blessed Charles, C.P. as it is told in Fr. Roger Mercurio's new book on the Passionists.

Michael Higgins, C.P.
Editor

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The City As Sacred Place

[An address delivered by Donald Senior, C.P., on the occasion of his inauguration as the fourth president of Catholic Theological Union at Chicago, September 25, 1988]

I am grateful to have the opportunity to reflect very briefly with you on my perception of Catholic Theological Union and its mission of preparing men and women for ministry in the Church.

Twenty years ago, almost to the day, Catholic Theological Union opened its doors for the first time. It was the fulfillment of a wildly hopeful dream that had begun five years before that on the campus of the University of Chicago. Cardinal Leo Joseph Suenens, the primate of Belgium and one of the early heroes of the Second Vatican Council gave a speech at the university on the "Future of Seminary Education in the Post-Conciliar Era." He cited three qualities he considered faithful to the spirit of the Council and crucial for theological education: that the seminary be (1) urban based; (2) be ecumenical in spirit and (3) be near a great university center.

Inspired by that speech, Dean Gerald Brauer of the Divinity School and several Catholic seminary faculty members—a Benedictine, a Servite, and a Passionist—later to be joined by the Franciscans—began the long series of conversations that would ultimately lead to the founding of Catholic Theological Union in Hyde Park, Chicago, in 1967, with its first school year in 1968. The three charter communities—Franciscans, Passionists, and Servites—would soon be joined by many others as the school grew incredibly to its current 30 members in the Union.

I think it is important to remember that the decision taken twenty years ago was not a decision based on desperation or retrenchment. The communities were not plagued with declining vocations or empty buildings. No, it was a courageous decision based on new possibilities, on a vision of doing things better, more creatively, more collaboratively, and more in tune with the stirrings of the Spirit of God as seen in the signs of the times. For that they were willing to leave behind well-established and cherished locations, to disrupt familiar ways of doing things, to concede their own autonomy—to build something better. I take my academic hat off to those that made that decision and to those who implemented it.

Of the three qualities cited by Cardinal Suenens—urban based, ecumenical, university context—the one most expressive of Catholic Theological Union's experience and perhaps the most instructive for its future mission was that of being urban based. For almost all of the Orders who have joined Catholic Theological Union, coming to the school involved a move to the city. Hyde Park, Chicago was a long way from Teutopolis, Illinois, or Saint Meinrad, Indiana, or Carthage, Ohio, or DuPere, Wisconsin, or Olympia Fields or you name it.



Where we are is what we are .

Catholic seminary education prior to the advent of the Vatican Council was, by and large, a phenomenon of the countryside. In some cases what started as country became the suburbs as the cities marched on. But the idea was firm. Seminaries were not usually planted in the midst of the city. This was not because most of the Catholic population was located in rural areas or that seminaries were training people for rural ministry. It was, instead, a quest for isolation, solitude, and a contemplative atmosphere considered most conducive for preparation to preach the Gospel.

But in 1968, with the impact of the Vatican Council fresh and forceful, the radical changes that were sweeping through the Roman Catholic Church (as they also were through most of the western political and social world) could be symbolized in that single step: the move to the city, from the relatively tranquil countryside to the turbulent urban atmosphere of Chicago, 1968.

The city—that intersection of peoples and cultures and social classes; that breeder of hope and breaker of dreams; that parade ground of urban planning and showcase of human problems. It was there, the founders of Catholic Theological Union decided, that one would find the best environment to prepare Christians to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

As many of you know, I stepped from the biblical field to become an administrator—whether this means consignment to Sheol or a place in the firmament remains to be seen. So please indulge me if I place this move to the city and its implications for Catholic Theological Union's mission against the backdrop of the biblical drama.

The flight from the city and the seeking of strength in an atmosphere of tranquility and solitude have, one must admit, strong biblical roots. The desert haunted Israel as its place of origin and place of refuge. In the wilderness Israel itself had been formed and tested. The very environment of the desert spoke of purity and simplicity. Not a romantic nature refuge but a stark place without corruption, without sophistication, without distraction. A place, in fact, unlike the city.

Catholic seminary training—like Catholic spirituality itself—had long been, and still is, dominated by the lure of the desert. But there is another, less-exploited biblical tradition that also should inform our spirituality—one, in fact, more fundamental than the symbolism

of the desert, and that is the Bible's claim that the final resting place of the sacred is not in the desert but in the city. The deep current of Israel's story—and of the biblical vision created by it—is a movement **from the desert to the city.**

God's presence is not confined to a whisper at the mouth of the cave, nor the mysterious guiding pillar of cloud in the wilderness plains, nor a voice from a mountaintop storm. The biblical God is also in the city and the city is, therefore, a sacred place. The temple would ultimately be planted in the midst of the brawling city. And the God-implanted yearning of the people was, in fact, to leave the desert for the promised land, with its organization, its government, its inevitable human interaction.

And so, for both testaments, Jerusalem becomes the ultimate symbol of the sacred place where God dwells with the people. For the Hebrews, hope focused on the historical Jerusalem—the city of Temple and monarch; for the followers of Jesus, hopes expressed in the symbol of a new and transcendent Jerusalem—that convergence of redeemed humanity with God. Jesus had drawn on the contemplative strength of the desert and his ministry was ignited by a desert prophet; but when the climax of his mission was upon him, he set his face inevitably for the city, Jerusalem.

The lure of Jerusalem as sacred place reminds us as readers of the Scriptures that the God of Israel, the God of Jesus, is not ultimately a God of solitude—not an isolated autonomous God. But a God of people, of human solidarity, a God committed to justice, a God of diversity. Fidelity to this God would not be measured ultimately by the intensity of one's contemplation but by the fidelity to widow, orphan, and sojourner that must issue from true contemplation. The widow, the orphan, the sojourner converge on the city—then as now. The lure of the desert—an authentic Christian impulse—can only be indulged when it is seen as a sojourn. For the biblical God is a God of the city; and the truly sacred place of the biblical world is the urban place.

It was precisely this vision of the city as sacred place that drew the founders of Catholic Theological Union to leave the countryside and come here. They hoped to find in the city the convergence of peoples and resources, the visibility of human hope and human plight, the mix of race and culture and economic status that would



remind them of the Gospel and provide the best environment to train people to proclaim it in a credible way.

But the Bible refrains from idealizing the city, just as one should hesitate to idealize the desert solitude. In the desert Israel had failed and complained and shattered its covenant with God. The desert was the abode of demons as well as the campground of angels and prophets. The book of Revelation hymns the new and heavenly Jerusalem, the city of light coming down from above. But for most of its chapters it roundly indicts the cruelty and injustice that reigned in the city; and the author labels as a demonic beast that great urban power, Rome itself.

Anyone who came to Chicago in the summer of 1968 would probably not be tempted to mistake it for the heavenly Jerusalem. The lights that illumined this city were the fires burning in the wake of Martin Luther King's assassination. And the shouts one heard in the heart of the city were not the saints shouting hosannas to the Lamb but the angry and brutal shouts of the riots in Grant Park. The country itself was whiplashed as it moved from the ecstasy of placing a man on the moon to the shattering realities of political assassinations and the chokehold of a demoralizing, immoral war.

So the city could not be sought as a dreamland or a place of escape. It was a genuine community of human beings; charged with hope of God's beauty; broken by sin and violence. A place of exciting diver

sity but laced with tension, prejudice and conflict. For these very reasons, the city remains the best place for theological education, and the symbol of the city still best explains our mission.

This is our heritage as a young school, barely graying at the temples after twenty years of life. Where we are is **what** we are. To be true to our mission and faithful to our young but rich heritage, Catholic Theological Union must be at home in the city—not just located there but part of it:

—open to human contact; aware of the economic and social structures that make human community tick; compassionate for people's very struggle to exist; not aloof by choice, or lifestyle, or latent attitude from the pain of people without hope or resources; committed to building community not as a trend but as fundamental response to the Gospel.

*... if we cannot relate to real
believers and learn from them,
then what we do is
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—in the city, finding God in the diversity of human culture and race, in the pluralism of custom and language, in the noise and sweat of the marketplace. Not wedded to an ideal church or an ideal liturgy or an ideal theology. But rooted in a living, local church and tolerant of different pieties and different theologies, and respectful of the religious experience of every believer, whether theologically literate or not.

While being at home in the city is our heritage, at the same time, we cannot ignore the ancient wisdoms. On the biblical map the desert always stretches beyond the city's edge. And the traditional placement of seminaries in the desert zone was not without its cogency. No minister of the Gospel in the city will long survive the temptation to cynicism or withdrawal or outright despair unless he or she has developed a genuine contemplative spirit. Only the vision of God

planted deep within the soul, sustained by vigorous faith, and nourished with a habit of prayer can give a minister of the Gospel the strength to stay the course.

That is what the "desert" came to mean for the biblical peoples. That is why great spirits from Moses and Elijah and Amos to Jesus himself went to the desert and found spiritual nourishment in that place of contemplation. But contemplation, we know, is not reserved to a place—desert or city; it is a habit of the heart and the soul and the mind. To be truly contemplative is to see reality deeply and without illusion. It is to see the world—both its beauty and its sin—with the eye of God. To be true to its heritage, Catholic Theological Union must bring the desert to the city.

Theological education for the church is not merely about data and methodologies and pastoral skills. It is also about character and virtue and public witness based on faith. It demands a sense of church rooted in one's own authentic religious experience and the living tradition of the Catholic community.

So, Catholic Theological Union—our students, my co-workers on faculty and administration and staff, and, good friends of our school—let us glory in our heritage tonight and recommit ourselves to it.

—Let us glory in the city, this city, Chicago, with all its energy and all its chaos.

—Let us glory in our headquarters, once an old city hotel, its front door on the sidewalk and the city streets; its windows open to the urban skyline.

—Let us glory in Hyde Park, with its rainbow quilt of Black and Hispanic and Asian and White, and its reputation for tolerance.

—Let us glory in our bonds of friendship and collaboration with the Hyde Park schools—Lutheran and McCormick and Chicago Theological Seminary and Meadville-Lombard—and beyond them to the ACTS schools all over Chicago, one of the greatest concentrations of theology schools in the world, living signs of our commitment to befriend and learn from other communities of faith.

—Let us glory in our association with the University of Chicago and its Divinity school, and be inspired by its peerless academic discipline and its commitment to the truth.

—And let us glory in the fact that we are parishoners of Saint

Thomas the Apostle Church, a genuine community of faith, a touchstone for us, reminding us that if we cannot relate to real people and real believers and learn from them, then what we do is without substance.

—And let us glory in our belonging to the great Church of Chicago, blessed with a vibrant tradition of pastoral innovation and good leadership, a church that gives us hope that the spirit of Vatican II is indeed alive and is the spirit of the future, a local church that links us to the worldwide Catholic church whose name we gratefully bear.

Let us, in short, be thankful for the modest miracle of our school: born in the midst of the modern church's great awakening, founded by people of vision and generosity, planted in the city, designed by people willing to work together and to create something worthwhile, blessed continuously by good faculty and good staff and good students.

In the years that unfold before us, let us be faithful to our heritage. As we continue to live in the city and learn from it and dedicate ourselves to it, let us stir up our faith and fill our souls with the vision of the Scriptures read to us this evening: the city of the Lamb, where there are no tears, no mourning, a city illumined by the light of the Lord, the new Jerusalem, the city of God.



Giving Sisters' Retreats, or: Damned If You Do and Damned If You Don't

The title may suggest the way some priests feel after the bewilderment of trying to find out what sisters want for their retreat, because American women religious today are at all points of the spectrum, from pre-Vatican II to totally disenchanted with the institutional Church. Actually, this is probably a healthy pluralism for religious life, but baffling for a retreat director going into the great unknown of the annual community retreat.

Some women religious want active guidance, others would refuse it. Some still look to the priest as an authority figure, and will behave toward him with a deference that will make him either pleased or uncomfortable, depending on his own self-image. Others have antennae tuned to sniff out the slightest hint of clericalism, and will find it no matter what. And there may be some of either extreme, plus others everywhere in the middle, in the same retreat group.

I have been asked to give some suggestions on how to approach this ambiguous undertaking. I do so not as it I could dictate right from wrong, but I offer them as a "view from the pew," from a woman religious who has lived through quite a few retreats led in various forms by men, and who has also done her share of giving them to both women and men.

First suggestion: advance preparation pays off. Learn as much as possible about the group before beginning. This includes such information as general level of education, degree of renewal, community

traditions and ministries, interests and spirituality. Find out who their great community heroines are, what are the favorite stories about them, and what they stand for in the popular imagination. What have these women suffered together, rejoiced together, labored over together? In the case of an open retreat in a retreat house, with sisters of many different congregations represented, this is not so easy. However, some of the same groundwork can still be done by checking out in advance the major congregations represented by number in the registration and learning something about them. An interested presence during the socializing at the beginning of the retreat can also go a long way toward acquisition of such information.

Second suggestion: assume good will unless proven otherwise; do not make the sisters prove it. Take care not to put the retreatants on the defensive by your own, perhaps very subtle, defensiveness. Saying this may seem unnecessary, obvious, or even patronizing (in this case, matronizing?) However, a defensive attitude is very easy to detect in someone who is not aware of it, and it quickly and even unconsciously puts others on the defensive as well.



A sure sign of a defensive feeling is the frequent use of sarcastic or putdown humor. It is my observation that sarcastic or belittling humor is much less tolerated among women than among men. Some women will resist it silently, others will revolt into active resentment. Putdown humor tests the level of anger, resentment, and cruelty in an audience. Women religious do not appreciate being tested for these characteristics. In many, the anger and resentment are there but may be difficult to express: from others, you may get more than you bargained for, especially if your scapegoats and theirs do not match. Most women do not want to be cruel. Cruelty has not been part of

their inculturation or idealized self-image, as it may have been for men who have been pushed to be competitive beyond their wishes or ability.

Third suggestion: be comfortable relating to women, neither fearing them nor idealizing them. Sometimes male religious who have lived too long in a celibate environment can be on one level open to relating to women as persons like themselves, while at the same time on some other level afraid of them as threats to chastity or to the emotional defenses that have been built up to avoid feeling.

The alternative is to carry a projected image of the ideal woman, against whom no real woman will ever measure up. The most deadly thing a male retreat director can do is to project his internalized image of an idealized woman, or woman religious, by talking about "the woman religious" in the abstract, and what she should be, or by hearkening back to the good old days when you knew what to expect from sisters. Women religious are still being idealized in official Church documents in whose composition they are denied a voice. They do not need it in a retreat.

Fourth suggestion: Try to get a feel for what these women are up against in their everyday lives. Some basic human sensitivity combined with good listening skills can go a long way toward a vision of what life is like from their point of view. Some men are very good at this. Others have never questioned their own conditioning and values, and in fact find it quite threatening to consider doing so. I remember well a seminarian who once told me that he could not imagine what it would be like to be a woman in the Church, because he had never been refused anything he really wanted. At the time, I think he was too insecure to be able to imagine it. I hope by now, several years ordained, that he can.

One of the most frustrating aspects of the life of women religious, one that is reaching more and more extensively into their consciousness, is the double signals they feel coming from the voice of the institutional Church. On one hand, they are assured that they are valued and cherished as a sign of consecrated holiness. They are faithful members of the Church, who have put the best parts of their lives into laboring for its continuing vitality. It has often been said that women religious in the United States are the group who have taken most seriously the call to renewal that came from the Council.

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As a result, they are the best educated, and perhaps the most dedicated and highly motivated group in the American Church today. Their theology, spirituality, ministry, and lifestyles have been altered radically to respond to new invitations to serve new needs.

As a result of their enthusiastic and loyal response to the call for renewal, they are also the group who have suffered most from misunderstanding, fear, and attempts to force them back into a way of living to which, once having abandoned it for good reason, they cannot return. So many women religious feel as well that they are "damned if they do, and damned if they don't." Having accepted the challenge, they often feel that they are being punished for it, criticized and condemned for doing the very thing they were called upon to do.

This frustration is not only present in sharply outspoken and critical sisters, but also in hundreds of the quiet, dedicated ones who go about their everyday work living in the terribly destructive tension between their desire to be lovingly for others as loyal ministers of the Church, and their impatience and anger over their feeling that their very loyalty catches them in oppressive situations in which they are victimized.

There are the daily frustrations of a parish teacher, principal, DRE, or pastoral associate who has more experience, creativity, and contact with the people than the inexperienced and shortsighted young curate who wields more authority. But she can be fired at the whim of the pastor, while he cannot. There are the frustrations of the sisters in difficult social justice ministries who must put up with local, state, and federal bureaucracies besides. These are women who see what the Church could be and experience their powerlessness to bring it

about because of their limited resources and limited access to decision-making positions, women who are overworked and underappreciated. Even the smoothest surface can cover surprisingly deep feelings of anger and frustration that most religious clerics will never experience in their whole lives. These women are prime candidates for not only physical and emotional burnout, but spiritual burnout as well. I have developed this question at length in **Beyond Anger: On Being a Feminist in the Church** (Paulist, 1986). What resources can you develop in the retreat context to help heal their wounds?

Fifth suggestion: be well informed about inculturated gender differences. The literature in this area is growing vastly, but reading a few well-chosen books like Anne Wilson Schaef's **Women's Reality** (Harper and Row, 1985) or **Women's Ways of Knowing** by Mary Belenky et al. (Basic Books, 1986) will help a great deal if you are not already familiar with some of this literature.



It has been well demonstrated by now that female culture is far more heavily oriented to relational harmony than competition. In addition, many women religious who entered twenty-five and more years ago were socialized in their religious formation to try to be the ideal sister, soft-spoken and demure, who shows only peace and joy. Many suffer from deep conflicts resulting from low self-esteem. Many would benefit from psychotherapy but will never seek it.

Consequently, many women are terrified by their anger, just as many men are terrified by their vulnerability. It has been aptly said that women will tend to cover anger with hurt, while men will cover hurt with anger, because tears and pain are socially acceptable and even expected from women, while aggression is not (Have you ever heard a man called "strident"?). Alternately, tears and visible weakness are equally mistrusted in men; witness the political havoc that is wrought when a male candidate for office "breaks down." But anger is considered a healthy expression of "manliness." While we are now pretty familiar with those stereotypes, that does not mean that they have been broken down; They continue to function quite strongly in society. The presenting sensitivity, tears, and vulnerability of a

woman may be just what it appears to be; or, it may be an indication of the anger and frustration she does not dare to express directly toward human persons or towards God.

Women as well as men are prone to workaholism, but not so much to escape their feelings or to feel productive as to win approval and affection. It is more likely this need for personal confirmation that drives them rather than empire building. Most women have been strongly socialized in both their family upbringing and their religious formation that their value lies in pleasing and being helpful: the Martha syndrome. Like Martha, they are then prone to resentment and confusion when their efforts are not rewarded with sufficient attention and praise. Learning to find affirmation in sitting like Mary at the feet of Jesus, learning to accept God's love simply for who they are, is often a painful growing edge.

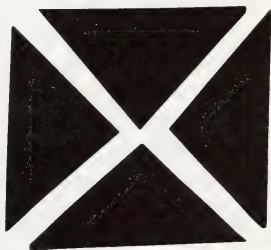
Certainly this is true for men as well, but usually the motivation is somewhat different. It is not so much the fear of being unproductive that makes the retreat experience of "doing nothing" so difficult; it is rather the feeling that it is selfish to be spending so much time on oneself, unless it will enable me to be of greater service as a result. The integration of ministry into one's retreat and personal prayer is very important, but care should be taken that the whole energy of the retreat is not directed at being a better minister, being of greater service. Sisters in apostolic congregations need to be reminded that spending time relaxing with God and basking in God's love, or struggling with the absence of God, is time well spent.

Sixth suggestion: be familiar with issues of midlife and aging. Women religious are an aging group in an aging American population. Most congregations have an average age somewhere in the sixties. This reality has a number of effects: fear about the future, overwork, increased burden of care for the aged in the congregation and for one's parents, being overwhelmed with feelings of diminishment and depression.

Midlife has never been studied with as much attention as it is being studied right now. Acquaintance with some of the literature is essential, to be able to name and reflect on the issues as they arise for retreatants. In midlife, there can be great turmoil and changes in ministry, prayer, relationships; reassessment of childhood and earlier life, of vocational decisions, of the value of one's life as it has

been lived thus far. Crises of affectivity, sexuality, self-esteem, and self-identity can be mistaken for vocational crisis. Experiences of physical diminishment and failure in what was previously successful, both normal at midlife, can trigger panic in the person who is unprepared or unable to recognize the symptoms for what they are.

Many more sisters are today seeking psychotherapy, especially at midlife, and finding it helpful. Yet often they lack the necessary help to integrate conflicts about relationships, past history, and self-esteem into spirituality they have been taught or into which they are trying to grow. Many simply do not have access or time to pursue the resources needed to do this integration. Many do not even have good spiritual direction available to them or encouraged. The annual retreat is therefore prime time for bringing together psychology and spirituality, for helping retreatants grow not only in prayer, but in understanding how prayer can inform and guide life issues. One of the best books I have read in this area is **Primary Speech: A Psychology of Prayer** by Ann and Barry Ulanov (Harper and Row, 1982).



Those who face imminent retirement or who are recently retired face similar issues all over again, but more intensely. The sense of loss, the fear of being forgotten or abandoned by a network of people for whom they used to matter, can be very acute. Even the self-starters who take the initiative in designing new programs of volunteer work and learning for themselves are not immune to these feelings. It is a time of deepening relationship with God, who must be even more than previously the one whose love matters most. Human relationships will change, but continued energy must be given to them as well.

If the retreat director can touch these needs and feelings, bring them out in the open, name them as common and normal, and show how to use them for greater intimacy with God, he will be doing well his work as facilitator of growth in prayer.

Seventh suggestion: trust your own experience; be yourself. There is nothing that makes the person more transparent than preaching in the community of faith. The context and expectations of a retreat make it doubly so. What you will be able to give depends not on how long you have lived, or what extraordinary gifts of prayer you have been given (though these help rather than hinder). What you can give depends on how open you have been in your own life to what God has done in you, how much you have been willing to cooperate in the work of grace. Share your own spirituality simply from the depth of yourself, without imposing it as the only norm. Communicate your own depth comfortably. Do not try to present yourself as having had experience that you have not had; phoniness shows. Your own inadequacy will be supplemented by God. You **must** believe this. Anyone who has been engaged in the work of retreats and spiritual direction long enough has had the experience of meaning one thing, and finding that what you said was understood differently—but in a way that the hearer was meant to hear it. These are experiences that confirm that what is going on is far greater than the ability or holiness of the preacher.

This simple honesty does not preclude sensitivity to the experience of others, however. If you are not yet at pre-retirement age, you can still be sensitive to and try to understand vicariously what persons at that stage experience. If you are not yet at midlife, you can still learn to recognize the signals of trouble at that point.

Being comfortable with yourself also includes learning to accept and trust the "feminine" in yourself. Again, a great deal is being written in this area today. But more important than being well-informed is being aware and accepting of your own feelings of fear, vulnerability, tenderness, and sensitivity, learning to let go of the fear that they will overwhelm your masculinity. Women who choose a male retreat director want to be led by a confident masculine presence, but not one that is abrasive, rough, and controlling because he must prove to himself his own strength.

On the practical side, a few suggestions about organization and

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presentation. First of all, team ministry for retreats is usually best. There is greater richness in the witness of two retreat leaders sharing their journey with God and the insights of their ministerial experience, provided that they are willing to take the extra time and effort to coordinate their presentations. If the team can consist of a priest and a sister, so much the better. If you can model male-female teamwork, you can give encouragement to those retreatants who are struggling and hoping to be able to do the same.

Second, give shorter rather than longer talks, fewer rather than more. Most sisters who come for a preached retreat will have lived some years in religious life and had a good amount of experience. They do not need many words. What they do need is for someone to show them how to bring their own experience into deeper relationship with God.

Therefore, third, give not only presentations but also questions for reflection and processing. Some groups may want discussion, others not. With or without discussion, however, give questions that can be taken for one's own prayer, and that will lead to wider horizons and deeper love.

Fourth, ground your points of presentation in Scripture, showing retreatants a process whereby they can do the same themselves. Give biblical references relating to your topic for further prayer and reflection. Show the retreatants how they can continue doing the same thing on their own, acquiring a method for life if they have not already done so.

Fifth, have well planned liturgical celebrations, tasteful and expressive of the movement of the retreat: ways to participate ritually in the particular aspects of life that are being developed verbally at the same point in the retreat. This will probably require extensive teamwork. At the Eucharist, give a real homily—not another conference—that models reflection on the readings as messages for our faith life.

Women religious are for the most part hard workers, sincere communicators, women who render faithful service. They come to a time of retreat as an opportunity for a new encounter with God. They come for refreshment, renewal, encouragement, and facilitation of growth in love. They want to be assured that in spite of obstacles and frustrations they have indeed chosen the portion that is best for them. They need to know that their labor is not for nothing, that they are appreciated by the wider Church, and that their increasing experiences of diminishment are really a call to greater intimacy with God. Isn't that what we all want?



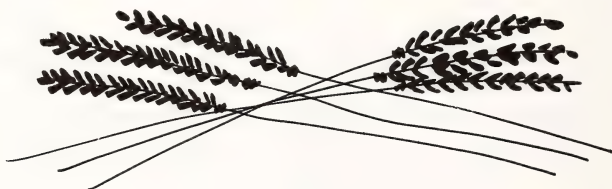
Concelebration: Boon or Bane?

It is now twenty-five years since the **Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy** brought about vast change in our worship. Much of its reform has become so ingrained that it is hard for us to remember what was normative before the Council. It is equally difficult for many Catholics to imagine anything different from what has been their experience since infancy and childhood. Thus we have come to accept concelebration as a normal way of public prayer. The question, concelebration: boon or bane?, may appear shocking at first blush. Investigation of the question may yield its own piquancy worthy of rethinking what we are accustomed to.

This article would like to sketch the issue in light of our experience. Then it would like to review some of the documentation briefly. This will raise the necessary questions about the meaning of presbyteral ministry, some current concerns and, finally, some markings by which to come to a fruitful choice in our public prayer. At the outset it is fitting that some limitations be stated. The article is written from a North American experience by a white, anglo male. Readers of this article are English speaking Passionists, male and female, whose lives are culturally diverse, whose pastoral settings are distinctive to them and whose experience of gender, church and pastoral service are varied. The reader is advised to be chary of accepting conclusions the writer makes without critical thinking about one's own context. The caveat is stated now simply because English speaking Passionists do public prayer in settings as diverse as Jamaica, England, Ireland, Austrailia and the Philippines as well as in North America.

The Experience

Concelebration, as we have come to know it, ordinarily refers to a number of ordained officials acting together in their vocation as presbyters at the Lord's table, under the leadership of a presider, in the midst of an Assembly. The concelebrated liturgy may be the local community eucharist. Or it may be a parish wedding or a funeral of a parent, Passionist nun, sister or brother. It might be a General or Provincial Chapter or some special occasion when Passionists alone or with others gather. Whatever the setting, concelebration is a collegial act and an ecclesial expression.



Over the last twenty-five years this has been seen as an advantage over many clergy going off to say Mass on their own at various times of the morning or at the same hour. It is also perceived as more congenial an action than individual priests synchronizing their Masses at individual altars, e.g., while on retreat or in a large community.

No doubt the issue of eucharistic celebration is a sensitive one. Many clergy have fashioned their own piety around daily saying of Mass.¹ This has been the stuff of holiness and piety, the means some articulate as avoiding sin and temptation and, in many instances, has been both inspirational and laudable. In some instances this has led to the question of the right to celebrate Mass each day. When this mindset prevails as a motive for concelebration, some clergy are now shocked when they go to some occasions and discover that they are not invited or expected to concelebrate or are denied what seems to be a right. Obviously what Vatican II saw as a theological and ecclesial boon, i.e., the unity of the priesthood and the unity of church manifested at the table, can be perceived differently by others. Some might count the number of "priests up there" thereby calculating the

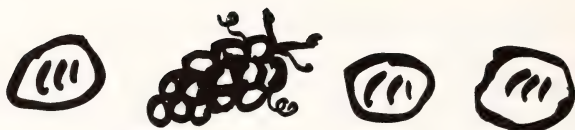
esteem rendered the deceased or the prestige rendered this marrying couple. Some might take umbrage because the number of concelebrating clergy so overwhelm the Assembly or might therefore deprive special ministers of the eucharist from functioning.

Despite the camps that pitch their tents around various perceptions and positions, some things do seem clear in Passionist circles. Many find that concelebration has achieved a different, better quality sense of eucharist and community. It has been a boon to anyone suffering from scruples. It has moved the eucharist from being a private matter, even a piety privilege, into a community setting. It has also been a boon in terms of Passionist involvement in local church. This writer can remember one poignant moment when a Passionist, young and vibrant, served a Latino community as their only Spanish speaking parish priest. After intense struggle he suddenly left them and the community in the middle of the night. The sadness and shock were patent. It seemed a fitting response for another Passionist to join the local Bishop and the pastor, the Spanish speaking sister and the people at the next Sunday eucharist and to concelebrate as a means of presence and support over the loss of their beloved priest.

So then why the question, concelebration: boon or bane?

For starters, the question itself highlights our language problems. When a worship aid lists the concelebrants, one is left wondering what the rest of the Assembly is doing. Are they celebrating the eucharist? Is their priestly ministry as the baptized complimentary to the ordained priesthood in the common action or doxology rendered God through the one high priest? Are they the recipients of the priests' action? While much of the literature uses the word *presider*, much of the spoken articulation still uses the "celebrant" or "the principal celebrant". Our ritual texts still confuse the issue of using both *presider* and *celebrant*. This is no small matter. Language betrays mindset. It can dwarf our sense of the Assembly's ministry under the shadow of a clericalist vocabulary. 'Concelebrant(s)' has been so long with us that it is difficult to know what to replace it with.

Secondly, the development and expansion of concelebration at this time of history cannot easily be justified by a facile reading of history. Robert Taft demonstrates² that western reading of eastern Catholic practice is often too facile and too little nuanced. Various styles of



presbyteral involvement obtain. In some cases a certain number of presbyters join the presiding Bishop or presbyter, sometimes at the table, sometimes from a specific section near the table or in a particular arrangement in the Assembly. Sometimes the presider does all the words proper to a presider; sometimes the presider parcels out some of the prayers to be proclaimed. Sometimes the presider is the only one who verbalizes the eucharistic prayer; sometimes other presbyters verbalize some or all of the prayers with the presider or they are silent. Whatever the tradition and at whatever historical moment in its development, a few things seem clear. At stake is not devotion nor the preoccupation of clergy, theological or otherwise. At stake in concelebration is *koinonia*, the meaning of being church and the hospitality one local church accords another at its table. It is more a matter of ecclesial communion and less a matter of the choreography of who stands where and says what.

In addition eastern experience is not limited to eucharistic concelebration in some of the traditions. We tend to think of the word referring only to table worship. Whether eastern or western, ancient or modern, concelebration can refer to vesper/evening prayer, a vigil, the rite of reconciliation of penitents and the anointing of the sick.

As Jean Carroll McGovern³ and Pierre Journal⁴ show, eucharistic concelebration in the western church has undergone various developments but has remained clearly focused around the manifestation of unity. This obtains even when concelebration became limited to the ordination of a new presbyter or the ordination of a new bishop. The unity referred to is ecclesial, the entire body of Christ. This is crucial in our retrospective reading of history. Thus what eastern and western traditions did is not determinative. Instead our reading of the traditions is instructive "for each generation manifests its own shifts in ecclesial consciousness with corresponding adjustments in the liturgical models by which this is expressed."⁵

In short, a reading of eucharistic concelebration over the last

twenty-five years seems to have been a boon immediately after the Council and in the ensuing years. Negotiating the shift from individual Masses by each presbyter in the community to a community concelebration was freighted with emotion and hard work. It does seem to have shifted our understanding of table sharing and community. Justification for this has been sought in what we can label as "ancient" or later liturgical practice. To question such boon seems ludicrous.



The Documentation

Four documents either trigger or trace clues as to the etiology or ongoing benefit of concelebration: the **Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy**⁶, **The General Instruction of the Roman Missal**⁷ in 1969 (GIRM), **The Passionist (male) Constitutions**⁸ and the recent **Guidelines**⁹ of the United States bishops. Each of these show where we were or are as church.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. #57 stated the final intention of the council members. "Concelebration, whereby the unity of the priesthood is appropriately manifested, has remained in use to this day in the Church both in the east and in the west. For this reason it has seemed good to the council to extend permission for concelebration to the following cases. . ." Occasions are then given: both the chrism and evening celebration of the Lord's supper on Holy Thursday, when councils, bishops conferences and synods occur, when an abbot is blessed. Other occasions would call for wholesome discretion: the conventual Mass, the eucharist celebrated at clergy meetings. #58 stated that a new rite would be drawn up. Here lay the foundation for significant development. No doubt it was perceived as a boon. What is not clear, what needs further tracings through the draft documents that led up to the final #57-8, is whether the Council members intended expansion with limitations or the wide expansion we have known (at least in North America).

GIRM. #153-208 consider the Concelebrated Mass. Interestingly

#153 expands on the Constitution's opening statement. "In a special way concelebration shows the unity of the people of God." It reaffirms the occasions which call for concelebration at the table. But it acts cautiously when it states: "Every ordinary, including the major superior of non-exempt clerical religious institutes and of societies of clerics living in community without vows, has the right to judge the suitability of, and to give permission for, concelebration in his churches and oratories (#155)." Obviously ordinaries found themselves amenable to benign interpretation and to positive support for concelebration because it was improvement and a boon over pre-Council practice. #155-160 then shift into clerical concerns: that no one is to enter into concelebration when the liturgy has begun, when concelebration is significant and/or permissible and norms and function. #161-208 offer performative, rubrical information about the order of celebration from beginning to end. A large portion is devoted to verbal and gestural etiquette during the eucharistic prayer (#170-191).

Passionist (male) Constitutions. The 1984 document makes no mention of concelebration of the eucharist (#42-44). It offers a theological motivation for public prayer: "when we celebrate the Eucharist, the Father gathers us around his Son." We offer doxology for the deeds of God done in worship, community life and apostolic work. #43 affirms the centrality of table sharing for each local community, the desideratum of daily celebration, the nourishment, unity and transformation that this holy work effects. When the same Constitutions address the Liturgy of the Hours (#45-46), they state that we celebrate at least morning and evening hours in common. Fruitful celebration unites Passionists "in brotherly concord."

United States' Bishops' Guidelines for the concelebration of the Eucharist. Issued in September, 1987, these guidelines are a revision of the 1978 guidelines. At the outset (Introduction) the Bishops Committee speaks of concelebration of the eucharist as a "sign of unity and Church order. As a unique collegial act of the Church at prayer, the concelebrated eucharist should be neither abused nor ignored. What is important for members of the liturgical assembly applies as well to bishops and priests who concelebrate; no one in the eucharist is required to say every word, perform every gesture, ritualize every action. The eucharist, whether ritually concelebrated

or not, is a collegial act which depends on the authentic collaboration of all the ministers and the assembly presided over by the bishop or one of the presbyters." Concelebration is nor the absolute right of the individual presbyter. The bishop may establish guidelines regarding the aptness of concelebration, its advisability, the number of concelebrants and the physical arrangements of cathedral and parish churches for concelebration (#1). In #2-10 these items are addressed individually. Since concelebration is to be a sign and a strengthening of the fraternal bond of priests and of the whole community, what is crucial in determining aptness is whether concelebration portrays the whole community acting together and the ecclesial, corporate act of thanksgiving around one altar. The criterion is clear: will concelebration manifest ecclesial unity or not. Local situations and good judgement, based on norms or guidelines, help in determining its advisability. Pastoral and spatial considerations may dictate some decision on the fitting number of concelebrants. In fact, a great number of concelebrations may prove counter productive, may "have a deleterious pastoral effect and may even hinder a sense of the unity of the gathered assembly." (U.S. Bishops **Guidelines**) The desire is not to exclude some clergy. Instead the desire is to be attentive to ritual problems and that priests chosen be representative of the larger group. #9 and #10 are clear that concelebrants exercise a specific ministry. Thus they are seated as a group. They act under the presidency of "only one bishop or one presbyter (who) presides over the whole celebration. Furthermore, the position of the concelebrants should not usurp the positions nor limit the functioning of other liturgical ministers nor block the view of the assembly." #11-42 address rubrical and tactical points that will render their role in a dignified and fitting manner.

What then can we make of these documents? Do they give clues as to whether eucharistic concelebration is boon or bane?



The **Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy** obviously saw concelebration as a boon. Its assumption is that it has been a continuous practice that calls for expansion. It went no further, at least in #57 and #58, than seeing this expansion as an expression of the unity of the priesthood. The **General Instruction**, while confining itself to rubrical concerns, saw concelebration as a showing of (ministerial) priestly and ecclesial unity. #155 offered some caution, a quiet note of bane, when it left the right to judge suitability to the ordinary. The 1984 **Passionist Constitutions** did not see fit to make any mention of concelebration, making it neither boon nor bane. The 1987 **Guidelines**, while seeing concelebration as a boon, i.e., a sign of unity and church order, a unique collegial act, indicate signs of concelebration as bane. It is not to be abused or ignored. It is action of the entire assembly united by one presider. There is need to judge its aptness through pastoral sensitivity. There is the first portrayal of its possibly hindering ecclesial unity.

Concelebration has shifted our perceptions about piety and spirituality. It has moved us away from a pre-Council position of "saying my Mass." It has been a boon in reclaiming a sense of collegial and ecclesial perspective. It has been required only at the ordination of bishops, priests and at the chrism Mass. It is recommended unless the good of the faithful should require or suggest otherwise, at: the evening Mass of the Lord's supper on Holy Thursday; the Mass for council, meetings of bishops and synods; at the Mass for the blessing of an abbot; the conventual Mass and the principal Mass in churches and oratories; and the Mass of any kind of meeting of priests.¹⁰ At other times it is optional. It is not desirable at all, if it be either hindrance to ecclesial unity or ritually or spatially gauche. Thus it is clear that there are instances when it is a bane. The issue would seem to be settled, especially when its advisability can be directed by guidelines given by authority. But is the issue settled?

The Meaning of Presbyteral Ministry

Since this article continues and one may assume that the writer is not concerned with filling more space, we can assume that the issue is not so simply settled. A number of items cluster around this con-

celebration question so that these items place concelebration in a context. The first context is that of meaning: how can we look on presbyteral ministry?

We cannot assume that, because the 1984 **Constitutions** make no mention of concelebration when they consider the eucharist and the liturgy of the hours, they are not aware of its development in the Passionist community. Obviously Passionist, like other communities of cleric and brother, began to concelebrate the eucharist during these years. What is salubrious in the **Constitutions** #42-46 is that the stress is on the communal and collegial meaning of both liturgies as a basis for community life, apostolic activity and brotherly concord. The omission of concelebration gives a clue about the nature of Passionist religious life. It is not meant to be two tiered where cleric plays off brother vocation. It is meant to be one vocation manifested by the charisms of ordained presbyterate and brotherly life funded by baptismal priesthood. In this regard it is akin to the ecclesial unity manifested by ordained and baptized complementing one another at the common table. It is commendable that no prescriptive or legal element made its way into the **Constitutions**.

Secondly, it gives a clue about the meaning of ministerial life in a religious community vis-a-vis presbyteral ministry exercised in the diocesan church. While the rite of ordination into presbyterate is the same for a diocesan and religious priest, its meaning and life style may focus uniquely. Certainly both diocesan and religious priests are called into a collegium of fellow presbyters; this takes priesthood out of earlier pedestalized and privatized spheres. But the meaning of this ministry may be colored by the ways in which this ministry is lived out. Brian E. Daley, in his *The Ministry of Disciples: Historical Reflections on the Role of Religious Priest*,¹¹ points out the tension when one is a religious priest. "Both priesthood and religious life too — both organized, official Christian ministry and organized, radical Christian discipleship — have themselves grown and changed constantly. . . in their concrete exercise and in their self-understanding. They have moved within a range of emphases that I have described as a tension of polarities: for priesthood, the tension between pastoral leadership and sacramental intercession, the ministerial (presbyteral, episcopal) and the sacerdotal; for religious life, the tension between contemplative and active life patterns, withdrawal from the world

and engagement in it.¹² Certainly the last twenty-five years have caused a shift in the theological model of ordained ministry: from an understanding of it as centered on the power to consecrate, to one focused on leadership, preaching and the unitive function of leadership."¹³ At the same time religious life has changed as communities reclaimed their own histories in light of contemporary need. The ministry all religious give the church is to "live this radical commitment, publicly and unmistakably, for the sake of the church and of all people. It is to be living sacraments . . . of Christian discipleship."¹⁴ In short, the ordained religious is "somehow to keep discipleship and apostolate together despite these tensions: to be commissioned, recognized office-holder within the institutional Church without letting one's position be a means for personal power, wealth or comfort; to be a leader who is also genuinely a colleague and a follower, a presider who is unreservedly a servant; to be an elder of the community, a presbyter in the true sense — a trusted and mature believer . . . while remaining a poor follower of Jesus, a prophet capable of seeing beyond present institutions, a disciple genuinely nourished by solitude and prayer, a sincere practitioner of the common life, a person of transparent chastity and simplicity of heart, a companion ready not only to cooperate but to obey. Being a religious priest is, quite clearly, living a kind of paradox."¹⁵ In similar vein, John W. O'Malley ("Priesthood, Ministry, and Religious Life: Some Historical and Historiographical Considerations")¹⁶ states that a division of labor has prevailed between diocesan and religious clergy over the centuries. The local, diocesan clergy has ministered to particular needs and circumstances. For the former words like office, parish, hierarchy and models like the Pastoral Epistles, the letters of Ignatius of Antioch, and the figures of Ambrose and Augustine express a diocesan priesthood. For the latter words like need, mission and fraternity and models like Jesus and his disciples in the Synoptics, the itinerant Paul and the charismatic Francis express a religious priesthood. For the first the model of church is that of sacrament and the title is priest. For the second the model of Church is that of herald and title is prophet. It is not a case of one being superior to another. It is important that both styles flourish in the church.

Perhaps, then, it is beneficial that the Pasionist constitutions of 1984 do not insert any mention of concelebration. Perhaps this reflects

*Concelebration has shifted
our perceptions about piety and
spirituality.*

a wholesome religious life instinct which recognizes that ordained ministry in a religious community is unique in its life style attitude and direction.

What is reflective in much of the literature about priesthood, ministry, parish since Vatican II and in the bishops **Guidelines for Concelebration** is that the model of ordained ministry and the model of church are more allied with a diocesan priesthood and diocesan church. It would be well for any religious community to address the meaning of ordained ministry and liturgical concelebration from its own distinctive role as prophetic and charismatic body. No community can simply assume a diocesan model of priesthood or church without some critical reflection and prudent judgments.

Current Concerns

If the analysis of Daley and O'Malley is correct, then it is no surprise that concelebration, a boon immediately after the Council, is being questioned and seen as a bane in some circles in North America. This is sometimes due to the rising consciousness of women's theology and their ministering the dangerous memory of forgotten truths to the entire church. To consider questioning concelebration as a "concession" to women is both an affront to them (and males too) as well as short changing the church in its quest for truth as the assembly of God. While some of the questioning arises from the serious and scholarly study of women's herstory/history, nevertheless it leads far beyond that endeavor. The fact is that concelebration, while developed in the present Roman rite and meant for all churches of that rite, is not an abstraction oblivious to cultural and theological investigations.¹⁷ The cultural context is significant. One would need to ask: what does concelebration signify for English Catholics,

Australian Catholics, United States Catholics, Jamaican Catholics? Is it the same or do cultural factors, both written and unwritten texts, enter into judging appropriate practice? Would concelebration of the eucharist enhance or hinder a sense of local assembly in each of the above cultures? Would it enrich or impoverish a sense of ecclesial unity and a Koinonia bond among local churches?

Secondly, what model of church does concelebration in a specific culture mirror? No area of theology presently operates without fashioning models.

This is true in revelation,¹⁸ ecclesiology,¹⁹ christology,²⁰ missiology²¹ and liturgics.²² In fact one can sometimes trace a consistency of model threading through all of these theological and pastoral concerns. For example, if the model of revelation is predominantly one of doctrine, then the model of church may well be institutional, etc. Stephen Bevans ("Models of Contextual Theology")²³ makes it clear that any question asked calls for a mix of four things: the spirit and message of the Gospel; the tradition of the christian people; the culture of a particular nation or region; and social change in that particular culture. As someone tries to plumb how these four factors interrelate, one will come to various approaches or models. Certainly this is true in North America. With its turn to the subject (and subjective)²⁴, liturgy can easily be seen from the models of process, therapy and liberation.²⁵ Basing any decision on concelebration from the prism of these models may result in seeing concelebration as a bane and may thwart liturgical practice from its connection with justice and a world beyond church.

Thirdly, recent writings²⁶ indicate that the issue of concelebration can be a bane insofar as its practice might hinder ecclesial unity (e.g., when clergy outnumber laity at the celebration), might narrow the nature and meaning of the eucharistic prayer (e.g., by focusing only on when the consecratory moment occurs or whether verbal or silent consecration by co-ministering presbyters renders their action as valid or invalid), and might lead us into the murky waters of what fruits result from the eucharist for clergy and laity. This last item is often connected with the issue of stipends,²⁷ announced intentions and a clarity about what spiritual benefit accrues in benefactor societies connected with a number of Masses associated with the stipend or offering. No doubt this is touchy territory and many local com-

munities, at least in North America, rely on some income for survival and the enabling of good works.

These three items, viz., the felt experience of concelebration vis-a-vis cultural awareness, the model of church and ministry reflected in practice, and the issue of liturgical, eucharistic meaning, indicate that some caution is called for as one judges whether concelebration is advisable or not, appropriate or not, boon or bane. These items, as well as the meaning of presbyteral ministry exercised in the Passionist community in a nation or region, call for some criteria usable for local communities.



Markings

Just as markings can help campers make their way through a forest, so also some markings can serve as pathway in deciding about concelebration.

First, will concelebration be a means of fostering unity in this Passionist community or ministerial endeavor? If the liturgy being celebrated is a local, daily community eucharist, will it foster the charisms of cleric and brother in mutual charity? What if the co-ministering presbyters far out number the lay members? What if the style seems to convey, wittingly or unwittingly, a sense of two tiered status? What if co-ministering, ordained members assume some of the roles that could be filled by others were they not usurped? There are some telling markings when concelebration is a bane. For example, when the clergy gather round the table and the rest, brothers or sisters or other laity, remain on a lesser step or level or assume a kneeling position while the clergy stand round the table. Or when "concelebrants" do not follow the lead of the presider in pace of praying, degree of sound and gesture. Or when communion is ministered in such a way that some "get it first" and others later or some receive

by self-ministration and others are ministered to. The fact is that strong tradition indicates (as well as the Bishops Guidelines) that spatial arrangement is important so that unity is manifested, that standing is the assembly's posture for eucharistic praying, that the presider determines the pace, that custody of the tongue is a necessary asceticism for clergy — both in sound and in tone, that the prayer is a unity best enabled by a presider praying it from opening dialogue to final doxology. The fact is that evidence from tradition (as well as the Bishops **Guidelines**) indicate that gesture by "concelebrants" should be modest (it is called for only at the initial epiclesis and optional at the words of institution), that communion is fittingly ministered to all²⁸, clergy and lay, by an exchange of word, and evocation of faith and a handing over of gracious eucharistic elements.

Secondly, are there occasions when concelebration should be limited by the Ordinary? It seems that some occasions call for limited or no concelebration. The most obvious is in the celebration of perpetual and lifelong commitment during the eucharist of final vows. The nature of this eucharist highlights religious profession, not the unity of priesthood. Furthermore, there are other occasions when concelebration would be a bane. For example, when a large number of Passionist males are meeting with or working with a small number of Passionist or other religious women. Or when a large number of Passionist clergy would hinder the appropriate functioning of special ministers of the eucharist in a Passionist or other parish. Or when Passionists in a formation center celebrate the eucharist with other religious and lay with whom they serve in academic and ministerial formation. This is due to an accurate instinct that is ingrained in religious life's heritage. It helps avoid the undesirable conflict that arises when the eucharist is made the battle ground for past hurts and present developments.

Thirdly, a number of shifts will be necessary for Passionists in order to live out the lofty ideals of our current **Constitutions**. It would be fitting if we became more attentive to physical arrangement,²⁹ both when concelebration is exercised and when it is not. How we fashion our space will convey both our lived out and our thought out ecclesiology. It will also reflect the presence or absence of any aesthetic dimension. It would be fitting if we became more attentive to the quality of vesture. This would say something about our apprecia-

tion or lack of appreciation for the dignity of the assembly and the dignity of eucharistic worship. It would be fitting if we became more attentive to the quality and appropriateness of our vessels and the authenticity of materials (e.g., the use of real, baked bread). It would be fitting that we become more attentive to the way we minister the sacrament so that we are ministered to in a society that gravitates towards fast food restaurants and is remiss in formal etiquette that allows us to be recipients of others' gracious hospitality.

...The ministry all religions give the church is to "live this radical commitment, publicly and unmistakably, for the sake of the church and of all people."

Conclusion

Twenty-five years after the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy we find ourselves in a different place. The present place requires that we ask nuanced questions and make wholesome, decisions. If we question concelebration, it is necessary to move beyond ecclesial unity as the sole value in order to include newer factors. These factors are: 1) is the setting for eucharist internal to Passionists or does it include others? 2) What will make the assembly's space aesthetically fit and will it allow concelebration or not? 3) Does the culture one lives in find concelebration congenial in its context and ecclesial meaning? An answer here cannot be imposed by people from the dominant culture both in mission land and in domestic (mission?) land. It can only be decoded and decided with the help of people who consider this culture as home and who operate out of their own liturgical theology and spirituality.

There are no easy answers. Sometimes concelebration is a boon. But it is more and more a bane. There are times when we are called

to refrain from concelebrating. The decision needs to be made through dialogue and with pastoral sensitivity. The decision requires that our liturgical practice is in harmony, not with a clericalism, but with our mission and vision as Religious.

¹Much of the piety surrounding the eucharist is based on the theology and ensuing practice of the early scholastic period. For a fine treatment see Gary Macy. **The Theologies of the Eucharist in the Early Scholastic Period**. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

²"Ex Oriente Lux? Some Reflections on Eucharistic Concelebration" **Worship** 54 (1983) 308-325.

³**Concelebration, Sign of the Unity of the Church**. New York: Herder and Herder, 1964.

⁴**The Rite of Concelebration**. New York: Descless, 1967.

⁵See Taft, 322.

⁶**The Liturgy Documents**. Chicago: Liturgy Training Publication, 1980.

⁷*Idem*.

⁸Rome, Passionist Generalate, 1984.

⁹United States Catholic Conference, Washington, D.C.

¹⁰See John M. Huels. **The Pastoral Companion**. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1986, p. 89.

¹¹**Theological Studies** 48 (1987) 605-629.

¹²*Idem*., 624

¹³*Idem*., 626

¹⁴*Idem*., 627

¹⁵*Idem*., 629

¹⁶**Theological Studies** 49 (1988) 223-257.

¹⁷See Robert J. Schreiter. **Constructing Local Theologies**. Maryknoll: Orbis, 1985.

¹⁸See Avery Dulles. **Models of Revelation**. New York: Doubleday and Co., 1983.

¹⁹See Avery Dulles. **Models of the Church**. New York: Doubleday and Co., 1974.

²⁰See William M. Thompson. **The Jesus Debate**. New York: Paulist Press, 1985 and H. Richard Niebuhr. **Church and Culture**. New York: Harper and Row, 1951.

²¹See Stephan Bevans "Models of Contextual Theology" **Missiology** (1985) 185-202.

²²See James Empeur. **Models of Liturgical Theology**. Nottingham: Grove Books, 1987.

²³Bevans, p. 186.

²⁴See M. Francis Mannion. "Liturgy and the Present Crisis of Culture" **Worship** 62 (1988) 98-123.

²⁵See Empereur, p. 3-44.

²⁶John F. Baldwin. "Concelebration: A Problem of Symbolic Roles in the Church" **Worship** 59 (1985) 32-47.

²⁷See M. Francis Mannion. "Stipends and Eucharistic Praxis" **Worship** 57 (1983) 194-214 and John M. Huels "Stipends in the New Code of Canon Law" **Worship** 57 (1983) 2115-224.

²⁸See Robert Taft. "Receiving communion — A Forgotten symbol?" **Worship** 57 (1983) 412-418

²⁹The remarks of the document "Environment and Art in Catholic Worship" are helpful here.





Final Nakedness

"By virtue of the specific mission that the Church entrusts to us Passionist, we make our own the words of Saint Paul: 'We preach Christ Crucified'. . ." (*Constitutions*, #64)

Friday, 10 p.m. A nurse calls to me from the telemetry room: "Father Frank! Don't go away! We've got an auto accident. Multiple trauma! The driver has no vital signs!"

"We Passionists make the Paschal Mystery the centre of our lives. . . . Christ's Passion and death are no mere historical events. They are ever-present realities to people in the world of today, 'crucified' as they are. . ." (#65)

Saturday, 10 p.m. Three paramedics wheel in an old man from a nursing home. One of them is doing cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The lead paramedic sees me and shakes his head: "Padre! This one's for you!"

"Our vocation as Passionists prompts us to familiarize ourselves thoroughly with the Passion of Christ, both in history and in the lives of people today. . ." (#65)

Sunday, 10 p.m. Parents rush into the Emergency Room with their tiny baby, delivered at home that very day. The infant is blue from lack of oxygen. One doctor sizes up the situation instantly and barks at the unit secretary: "Call Respiratory! And get the chaplain in here for the family! Double Stat!"

Each day Emergency Department ministry can deal with the final human nakedness: the hour of death. Men and women lie totally exposed when they die. They lose their most basic earthly possession: human life. Survivors are equally exposed emotionally: in shock, in fear, in anger, in grief, in guilt. How a person confronts the final nakedness of death reveals much about that person's deepest, inmost self.

"Our vocation as Passionists prompts us to familiarize ourselves thoroughly with the Passion of Christ, both in history and in the lives of people today..." (#65)

THE NAKED VIRGIN

PSALM 116

I love the Lord, because he hears me;
he listens to my prayers.
He listens to me
everytime I call to him.

A crowded suburban mall
An elderly brother and sister
Together Christmas shopping

A twilight dusk had fallen
They stood on the yellow line
Awaiting cars to pass

The danger of death was all around me;
the horrors of the grave closed in on me.
I was filled with fear and anxiety.
Then I called to the Lord,
"I beg you, Lord, save me!"

She never knew what hit her
A car behind her back
Its side view mirror extended

Her brother held her hand
His sleeves all soaked with blood
She probably died in his arms

The Lord is merciful and good;
our God is compassionate.
The Lord protects the helpless;
when I was in danger, he saved me.
Be confident, my heart,
because the Lord has been good to me.

Our paramedics brought her
At first a feeble heartbeat
But shortly . . . nothing at all

Much massive cranial trauma
Her purple cheeks and eyes
So swollen beyond recognition

Between remorse and tears
Her brother drops a bomb
"Oh, Father! My sister's a nun!"

I kept on believing, even when I said,
"I am completely crushed,"
even when I was afraid and said,
"No one can be trusted."

I enter our Trauma Room
Move slowly through the team
To bless her skin with oil

A shameful way to die!
This consecrated virgin!
All naked to the world!

What can I offer the Lord
for all his goodness to me?
I will bring a wine offering to the Lord,
to thank him.
I will give him what I have promised.

The monitors, bag mask, tubing
Syringes, needles, tape
A plastic-metal bomb!

I want to scream and explode
"Out! All you strangers! Out!"
"Unfold a sheet across her!"

How painful it is to the Lord
when one of his people dies.
I am your servant, Lord,
I serve you just as my mother did.



"Now! Get her brother in!
"And let us pray alone!
"Out! Let her die in peace!"

No way. . .there rarely is
Most E.R. deaths lack dignity
No family, friends. . .no warmth

The Lord saved me from death;
and kept me from defeat.
he stopped my tears
And so I walk in the presence of the Lord
in the world of the living.

I stand aside and pray
Exert to will a heartbeat
Desiring God's own power

The doctor shrugs my way
"I think we've tried enough"
So clinical, frigid: "Call it!"

I will give you a sacrifice of thanksgiving
and offer my prayer to you.
I will give you what I have promised.
Praise the Lord!

THE NAKED ANGEL

PSALM 8

O Lord, our God,
your greatness is seen in all the world!
Your praise reaches up to the heavens;
it is sung by children and babies.

The room with O.B. supplies
A sink of stainless steel
The "package" wrapped in blue
A large absorbant pad

I carefully open the folds
Some blood is oozing through
Until it lies exposed
A fetus of twenty weeks

When I look at the sky, which you have made,
at the moon and the stars,
which you set in their places —
What is man, that you think of him;
mere man, that you care for him?

Hands, feet in miniature
The eyelids, nose, and ears
Are formed to perfect scale
The genitals are male

His mother named him Matthew
She asked he be baptized
I make a pastoral judgment:
Parental peace of soul

Yet you made man inferior only to yourself;
you crowned him with glory and honor.
You appointed him ruler over everything you made.

I pour some water slowly
"If you are living, Matthew"
I know you are somewhere
With Him. . . "I baptize you. . ."

A facile decree from cushioned
High academic thrones:
"It's not a human being!"
Or Church savants: "To limbo!"

You placed man over all creation;
sheep and cattle, and the wild animals too,
the birds and the fish
and the creatures in the seas.



All hail, you theoreticians!
Come first and see! Be stained!
Touch! Feel! The fresh red blood!
And then . . . Go sit and judge!

Whoever doubts a human
At twenty weeks gestation
Or stakes a limbo claim
Has never knelt . . . up close

O Lord, our God,
your greatness is seen in all the world!

STRIPPED NAKED

PSALM 115

To you alone, O Lord, to you alone,
and not to us, must glory be given
because of your constant love and faithfulness.

Why should the nations ask us,
"Where is your God?"
Our God is in heaven;
he does whatever he wishes.

Stripped naked, Steve lies dying
He's seventy-five, obese
Amid a crowd of strangers
A massive heart attack

The doctor shakes his head
"His heart has stopped again"
Our Trauma Team is losing
Technology's power is finite

Their gods are made of silver and gold,
formed by human hands
They have mouths, but cannot speak,
and eyes, but cannot see.
They have ears, but cannot hear,
And noses, but cannot smell.
They have hands, but cannot feel,
and feet, but cannot walk;
they cannot make a sound.

I face Steve's wife, Estelle
So brittle, almost broken
She searches my eyes for the truth
"All human hope is gone"

Estelle refuses to hear
"He sat alone on the porch
While I was fixing supper
If only God would hear me!"

Trust in the Lord, all you that worship him.
The Lord remembers us and will bless us;
he will bless the people of Israel.
He will bless everyone who honors him,
the great and the small alike.

She takes my hand and squeezes
"June twelfth's the date we want!
Our fiftieth anniversary!
It's all we have to live for!

Now, Father, could we pray?
For Steve? That he lives till June?
Now please?" Her eyes are prayers
We bow our heads a moment

May the Lord give you children —
you and your descendants!
May you blessed by the Lord,
who made heaven and earth!

We share familiar words
"Our Father, who art in heaven . . .
Thy will be done on earth . . .
Deliver us from evil . . .

My lips are framing blessings
But deep within my heart
I sense Another's voice
"You bargain with my prayer?"

Heaven belongs to the Lord alone,
but he gave the earth to man.
The Lord is not praised by the dead,
by any who go down to the land of silence.
But we, the living, will give thanks to him
now and forever!

AMAZING GRACE!

Amazing Grace!
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me

I once was lost
But now am found
Was blind, but now I see

Kay dueled with death
Lymph cells growth wild
In twenty-third year soon

She lies and waits
"Admit to Hold"
Her fourth since end of June

'Twas grace that taught
My heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved

How precious did
That grace appear
The hour I first believed

High classic cheeks
Though hair now gone
All luminous eyes aglow

I tough Kay's hand
Enclose her palm
So clammy, moist and cold



The Lord has promised
Good to me
His word my hope secures

He will my shield
And portion be
As long as life endures

Kay smiles at me
Through eyes of pain
"Hi! How's your writing been?"

Unselfish heart
Involved, concerned
Kay pinches nerve within

Through many dangers
Toils and snares
I have already come

'Tis grace hath brought
Me safe thus far
And grace will lead me home

An artist, Kay
We'd talked before
Of style, of form, of flow

I weigh my words
"It's coming . . . but
Right now it's very slow"

Yes, when this flesh
And heart shall fail
And mortal life shall cease

Amazing grace
Shall then prevail
In heaven's joy and peace

Kay's voice so soft
"Now . . . everything
Comes slowly for me too"

I wince with shame
Madonna saint
Authentic, piercing, true

When we've been there
Ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun

We've no less days
To sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun

All living God!
Redemptive Word!
That spoke and set us free

On Friday last
With graceful zest
Kay danced a waltz with Thee!

Amazing Grace!
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me

I once was lost
But now am found
Was blind, but now I see!

Today's calendar date in late March announces the arrival of spring.
But outside my window, snow flurries are clothing trees and shrubs

with a temporary garment of white. Only when this outer covering melts away will the life-filled petals begin to blossom.

Today is also a weekday during the penitential season of Lent. Christian tradition embraces a teaching on earthly purification: each person will attain redemption only by passing through an experience of suffering and the nakedness of death.

To a diagnostic, clinical eye, nakedness and suffering expose the mortality of the human body.

To a discerning, faith-filled eye, nakedness and suffering reveal the immortality of the human spirit.

Nakedness and suffering can truly be redemptive.

The most rewarding encounters of my hospital ministry are to share with another the moment of pain and suffering. . . or a moment of paschal joy. . . a moment of redemptive nakedness. . . a memory of Jesus' passion and resurrection.

Fr. Francis X. Keenan, C.P.

*O Lord, our God.
your greatness is seen
in all the world!
Your praise reaches up
to the heavens; it is sung
by children and babies.*

Chapter XII

Blessed Charles Houban of Dublin

Father Dominic Barberi had made the first foundation in north Europe at Ere in Belgium. Once Dominic had crossed into England, his heart remained there. He would return to Ere for the annual visitation, usually in the fall, but the rest of the year he lived in England.

One day a young Dutchman knocked at the door of the Belgian monastery. He was greeted by the superior, Father Peter Magagnoto. The young Dutchman was John Andrew Houban of Munster-Geleen, from the province of Limburg, The Netherlands. One of ten children, John was born on December 11, 1821, to Peter and Jane Houban.

John Andrew received his first Holy Communion at the age of thirteen. He had continued his studies at nearby Sittard. For a short time he was called to military training. His parents were soon able to pay for a substitute. So he returned home to continue his studies.

At school he heard about the Passionists at Ere from one of his teachers. He felt this was where the Lord wanted him and so in 1845 he made the journey to Belgium. Father Dominic had just arrived several weeks earlier from England to give the religious the news of the conversation of John Henry Newman to the Roman Catholic Church. This was indeed an exciting time to join the small group of Italian Passionists in the north!

John Andrew was vested on December 1, 1845. We know little about his novitiate, but it proved to be an important year for the

young Dutchman. Charles of St. Andrew as he was now called took his final vows on December 10, at the hands of Father Peter Magagnotto.

Charles now entered upon his seminary studies under the guidance of Father Seraphim Giammaria. Born at Agagni, Seraphim in 1821 joined the Congregation. In 1840 Father Anthony Testa sent him to Belgium with Dominic. He remained there in training the young men for Passionist life. He was a student of spirituality, a director of many people, and a preserver of Passionist history and traditions. In 1876 he was chosen General Secretary, and returned to Italy where he died in 1879.

Seraphim saw the goodness of this young Dutchman and directed him into the ways of prayer, penance and recollection. Charles grew spiritually under his guidance. He was ordained on December 21, 1850.

A year later he was sent to England. Dominic had died. Father Ignatius Spencer was leading the province for a few years. Charles was assigned to Aston Hall. There he met Irish immigrants for the first time. They at once won his heart.



In November, 1854 Charles was appointed vice-master at St. Wilfrids, Cotton Hall. When the novitiate was moved to Broadway, Charles was told to remain at St. Wilfrids in the small prish there. But other fields awaited him.

Father Dominic had preached the first Passionist Mission in Ireland in 1849. Again and again missionaries were requested to conduct other missions. But no foundation had been made. Finally, in August, 1855, land at Harold's Cross, Mount Argus, Dublin, was offered to the Passionists.

All necessary business arrangements were made. The Passionists entered their new home on August 15, 1857. The first superior was the Honorable Captain Charles Reginald Pakenham, known as Father Paul Mary, Passionist! A word is due to Father Paul Mary.

Charles Pakenham was the nephew of the Duke of Wellington. He was born in 1821 in Dublin. He entered the military academy at Sandhurst, and was commissioned in 1839. Interested in the Tractarian movement, he finally was convinced that he must become a Catholic. Wiseman received him August 15, 1850.

Now the convert considered the religious life. He asked to be received into the Passionist Congregation. Father Vincent Grotti clothed him in the habit on May 22, 1851. He was ordained September 29, 1855. After a short stay in Rome he was called to be the founder of the first monastery in Dublin. The dedication took place on August 15, 1857. Shortly afterwards Father Paul Mary was stricken with a severe illness and died that same year.

That was the year Father Charles came to Dublin. He had reached "home" at last. There he remained except for a few years when he was assigned to work in England. He returned to Dublin for good in January, 1874.



During these years the Catholic Church was being renewed in England, Ireland and Scotland. The penal laws were removed. Catholics in Ireland could again practice the faith, while others in England and Scotland were returning to the Church. There was work for Passionists to do in the British Isles.

The provincial headquarters were established at Highgate in London in 1858. On October 21, 1861, the solemn dedication of the church there was joyously celebrated. Manning preached. Forty priests attended. The Choir sang Mozart's 12th. It was a glorious oc-

casation for Catholics in England!

A few years later in 1865 the Passionists took a parish at Stanhope Street, Glasgow. Four years later a new and larger church was built at Parson Street, dedicated to Saint Mungo. In 1869 after a successful mission in Belfast, the Passionists were offered Holy Cross church there.

The new monasteries and churches in the important cities of Dublin, London, Glasgow, and Belfast were not only something special for Passionists. Catholics throughout the British Isles rejoiced at each new church in their midsts. For three centuries they had not been free to worship God openly. A new church was truly a "resurrection" after the years of Golgotha. Newman called it a 'second spring.' "The Church in England has died, the Church lives again!"

In Rome the Passionist General Superior, Bernard Prelini, lamented the expenses with the debts incurred for these new buildings, the external pomp accompanying the dedications, the distances religious traveled to participate in the festivities, etc. He failed to understand the excitement the Catholics of England, Ireland and Scotland experienced in once again being able to build a new church! The Church that was dead was risen again. Perhaps there were at times excesses, but only the "older brother" was critical of the feasting and making merry when the prodigal son had returned!

During these years Father Charles lived a simple life of prayer and service to the ordinary people of Dublin. He prayed for them and with them. He would spend hours in the confessional. Again and again he would impart blessings upon the sick and wearied. Many were cured by his prayers and blessings. And people responded to his services for they recognized in him a holy person, a man of God, one who loved them even as the Lord did.



Father Charles found this ministry taxing. Little time remained for himself. But he was a man of prayer. We were told that he remained faithful to the "regular observances" of the community's monastic schedule. If others would not maintain fidelity to "observances" because of the demands of the ministries, this did not disturb his own inner peace. There were, however, others who were disturbed by the lack of religious observance. This included superiors in Rome also.

In Rome Father General Prelini reported on "abuses" in England as he perceived Passionist life there. The Chapter of 1878 was unable to settle the problem completely as we have seen. In fact the new General Father Bernard Mary Silvestrelli visited England and Ireland in 1879. He wrote "While on the one hand we do not accept all as true, and we do not believe the reports that have been spread abroad regarding the religious of the Province, on the other hand we cannot deny the evident fact that many things said have had foundations."

For Father Charles it was not an insoluble issue. His solution was sincere personal fidelity both to community exercises and to the needs of his people. He had a tremendous thirst for prayer and a burning zeal for people. In his simple way he strove to satisfy both needs. He was at peace.

Faithful to the end, worn out from work, he died on January 5, 1893, at Mount Argus. The evening papers announced the news that Father Charles of Mount Argus was dead. People gathered early to have one last look at their friend, one last prayer at his side, and perhaps a relic of some sort to remember him by.

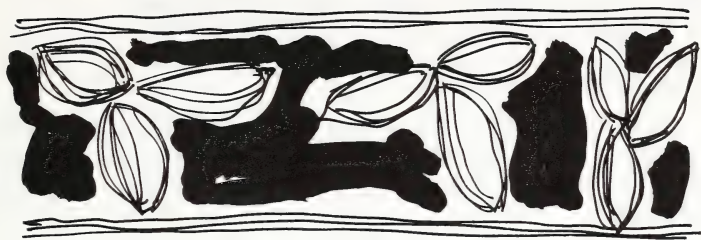
They came from all parts of Dublin and distant areas of Ireland. They came by the thousands and thousands — to pay their last respects. They came for four days!

The final Requiem and Libera were sung. The crowds were immense. Police kept the faithful in order as the body of Father Charles was borne to its final resting place in the monastery cemetery.

But down through the years the people have kept coming. Pope John Paul II beatified him on October 16, 1988.

Why this demonstration of love and affection by the vast multitudes of Irish at his funeral? Why his beatification by Pope John Paul II?

His popularity did not rest on his dignity as the superior nor on his eloquence as a preacher. He lived as a "simple" religious, faithful



to Passionist prayer, in love with the people.

The secret of his life was that he was a man who gave himself to the service of people: whether in hearing their confessions, or ministering the Holy Eucharist to them, in praying or offering the Holy Sacrifice with them and for them. Father Charles day after day was there to serve in the church of St. Paul of the Cross, on Mount Argus, Dublin.

The crowds who came to his funeral, the number who kept coming month after month to his simple grave at the side of the Mount Argus Church, the devout who committed their problems to his prayers — all testify to the holiness, dedication, zeal of this Passionist Priest. He had been their friend and spiritual guide on earth. He would now continue to intercede for them in heaven.

Because of Father Charles Mount Argus would continue to be a center for spiritual renewal and help for many years to come. When St. Paul of the Cross built his first church on the hillside of Monte Argentario he wanted it to be open to the poor and needy. He even pleaded with Cardinal Altieri to bless his church as a public oratory. His ideal was that those seeking counsel and support could find it readily in every Passionist Church.

The great Passionist Church in Dublin has ever remained true to this ideal of the Founder. Throughout the world there are other such Passionist churches available to God's "little ones" seeking peace and quiet prayer, an opportunity for reconciliation. The beatification of Father Charles of Mount Argus testifies to the authenticity of this service by Passionists to the spiritually poor and needy of the local churches.

Biography of Authors

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Rev. Donald Senior, C.P. is the President of Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. His most recent book is the **Passion of Jesus: The Gospel of Mark**" published by Michael Glazier, Inc. Wilmington, Delaware.

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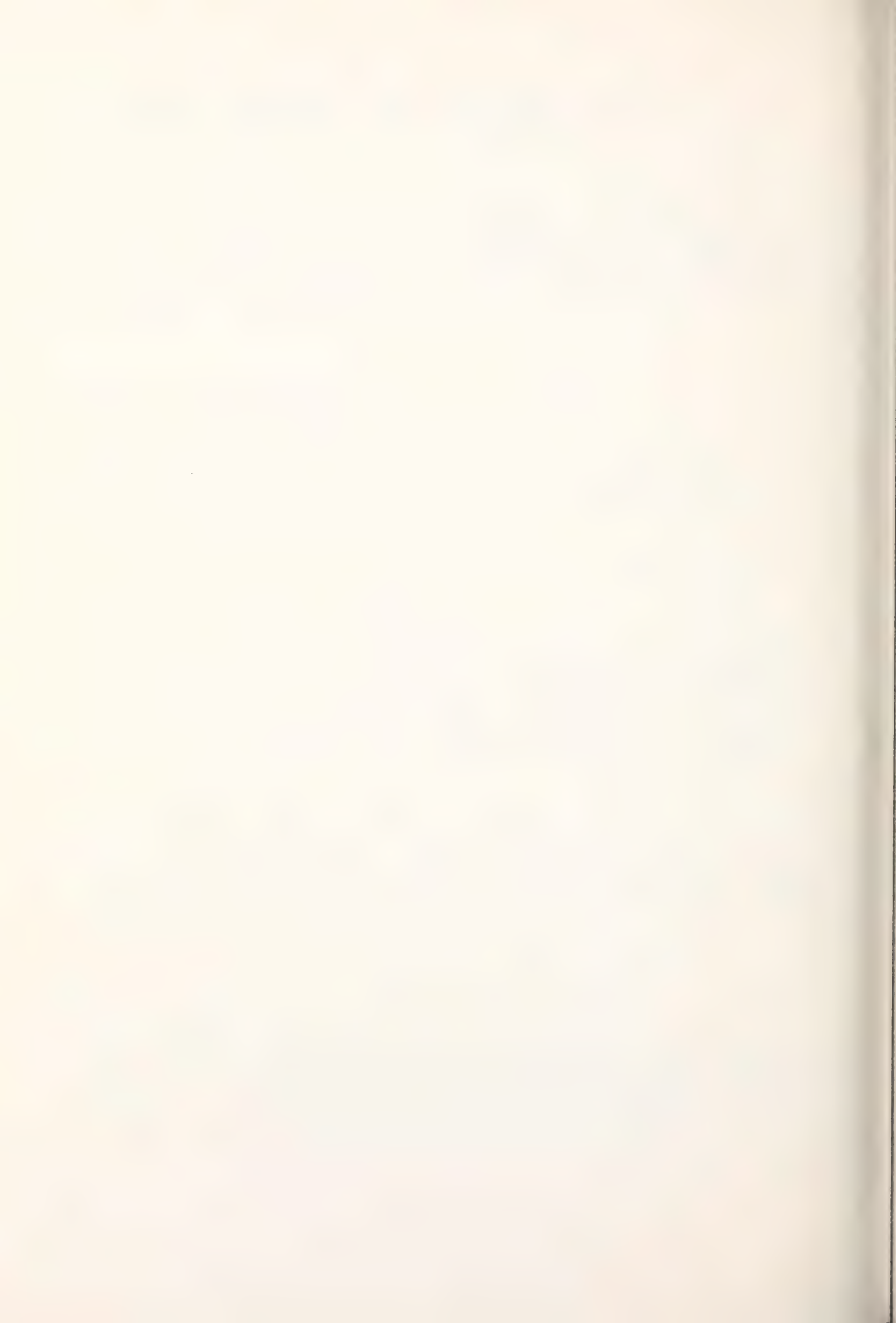
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The city-- that intersection of
peoples and cultures and social classes;
that breeder of hope and breaker of
dreams; that parade of urban planning
and showcase of
human problems.

Donald Senior. C.P.

The City as Sacred Place

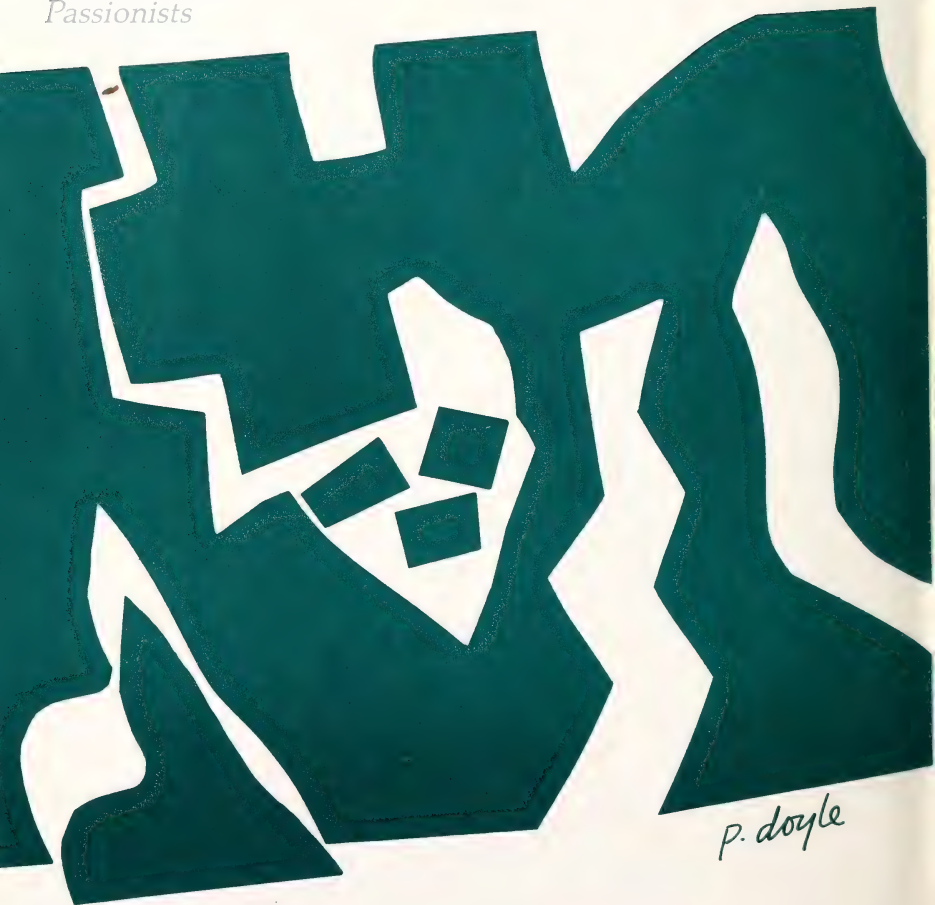
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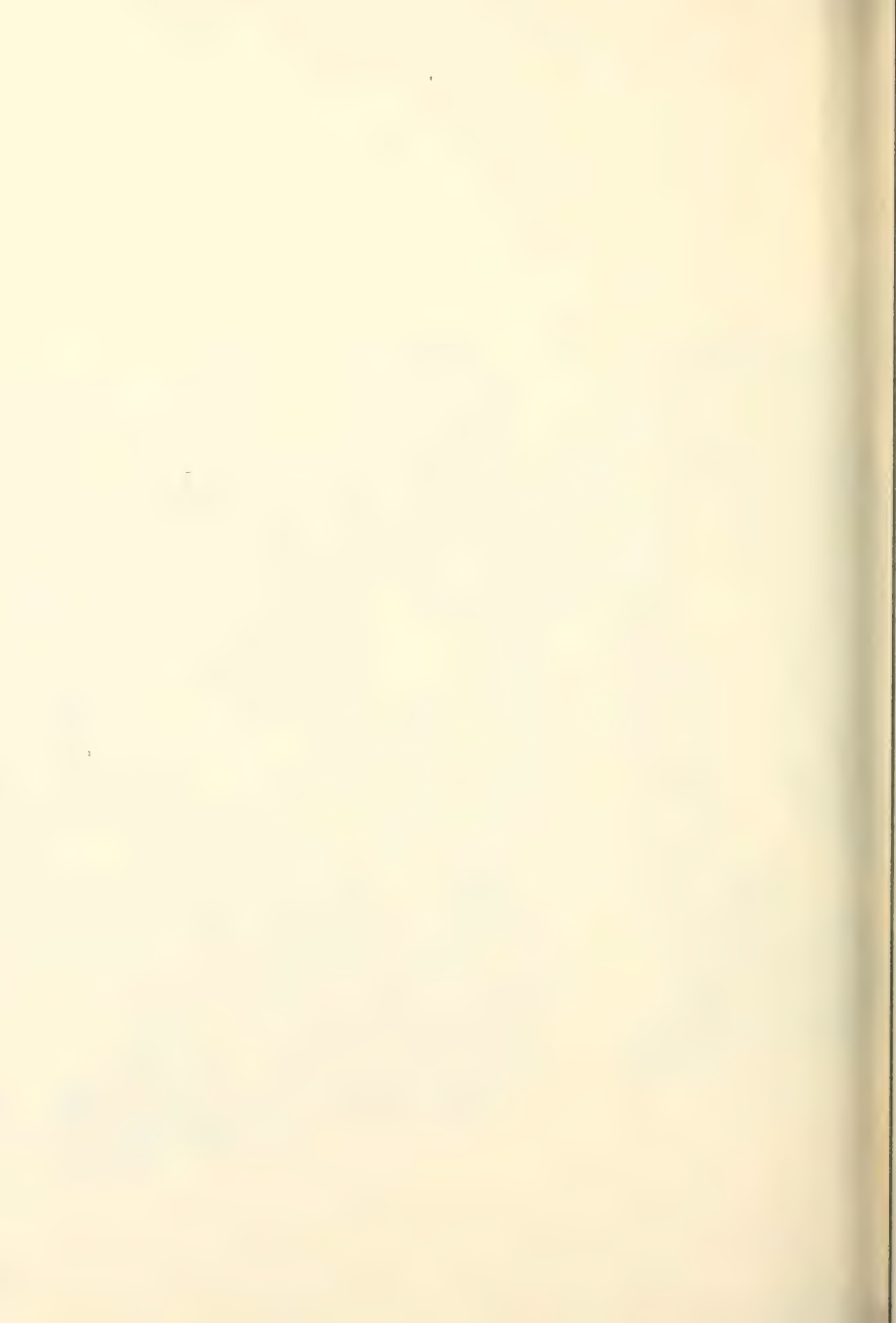
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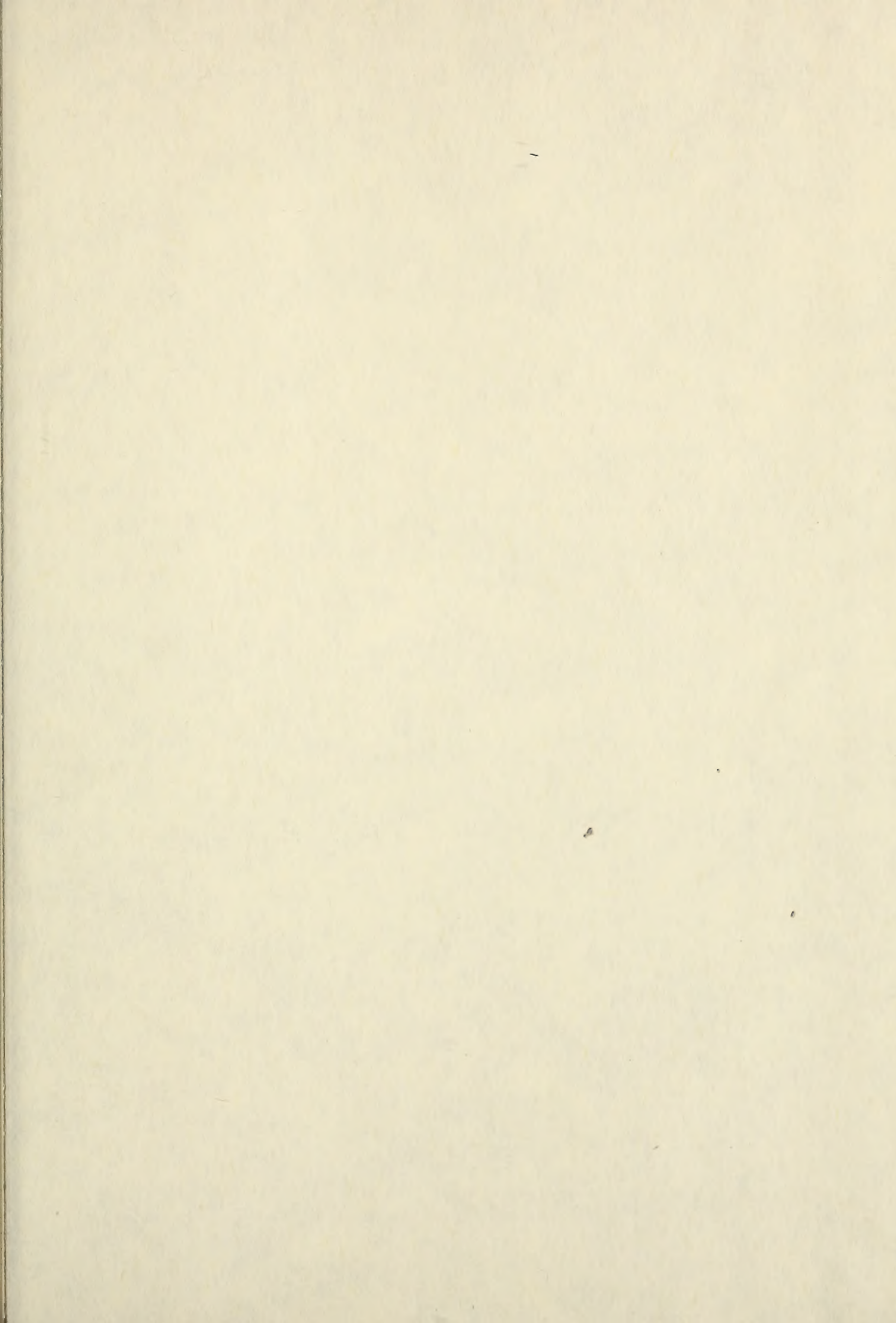
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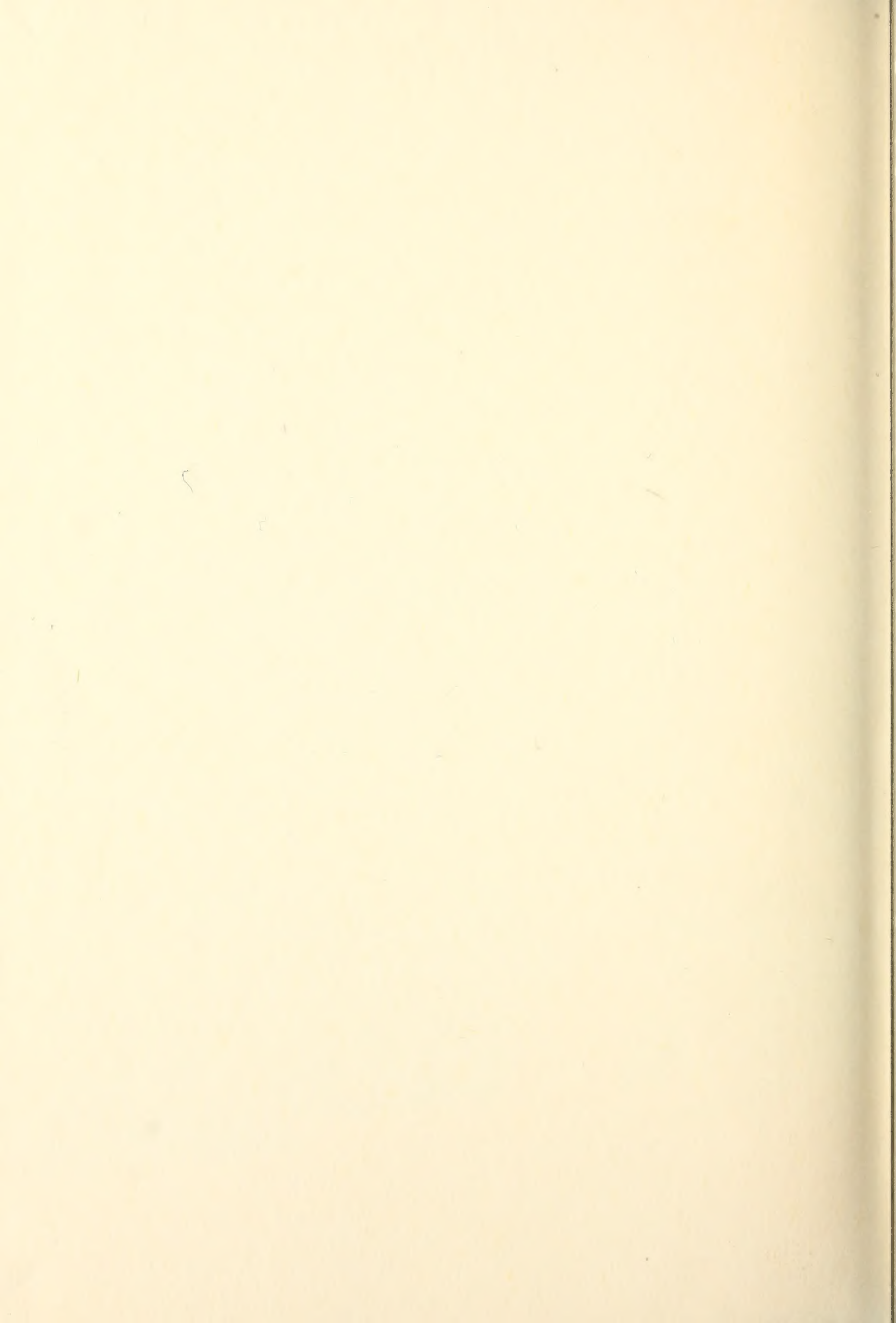


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